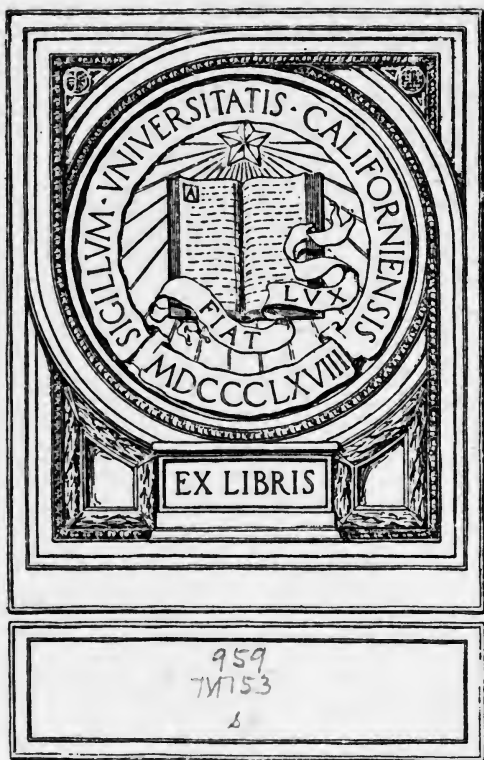


THE SISTINE EVE
AND OTHER POEMS
BY
PERCY MACKAYE







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AND OTHER POEMS

BY

PERCY MACKAYE

AUTHOR OF "THE PRESENT HOUR," ETC.



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To
W. V. M. E. A. R.
&
R. T.
IN FELLOWSHIP

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PART ONE

POEMS CHIEFLY OCCASIONAL

TICONDEROGA ¹

A BALLAD

I

*What spirits conjure thee from time,
Ticonderoga?
On thy headland rock
Of history,
Who are these that knock
And summon thee
To move thine ancient lips in rhyme,
Ticonderoga?*

Where the wind-blown swallows
Veer and vary,
Where the shore and shallows
Lie visionary,
Titans three
Stand at my knee:
Each one is a century.
In their shadow, silently,
Sits the sibyl Memory.
And her silence questions me:

¹ Read at the celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the discovery of Lake Champlain, at Fort Ticonderoga, July 6, 1909.

II

*Who glide so dim upon the lake
Ticonderoga?
Over their dreaming prow
The morning star
Blazes their goal; but now —
More dusk and far —
What old world dwindles in their wake,
Ticonderoga?*

The fleur-de-lis, the fleur-de-lis !
The White Chevalier — lo, 'tis he !
His pale canoe along the tide
The painted Huron paddles guide
With dumb, subdued elation;
The wild dawn stains their bodies bare,
The wild dawn gleams about his hair;
Steeped in his soul's adventure, lie
The valleys of discovery —
The peaks of expectation.
Midway the lake they pause: on high
His arm he raises solemnly.
Above the lilies, that emboss
His azure banner, and the pied
Algonquin plumes that float beside,
He holds the shining cross.

“Champlain!” — The placid word
The mute air hath not stirred.
Touched by the morning’s wing,
The ruddied waters, quickening,
Alone are kindled by that christening.
Quaint splendors mass
Within the lake’s clear glass,
And liquid lilies golden run
In rose gules of the rising sun.
Naught else there of acclaim
Greets the great Chevalier’s name,
Save where the water-fowl’s primeval broods
Awake Bulwagga’s lone and echoing solitudes.

III

What strident horror breaks thy spell,

Ticonderoga?

What long and ululating yell?

The Iroquois: in covert glade
They build their pine-bough palisade,
And weave in trance
Their sachem dance
With hawk-screams of their heathen wars,
Till naked on my shrilling shores
Mohawk and wild Algonquin meet
And taunt, with fleer and blown conceit,

Each other's painted ranks:
But, lo where now their flanks
Give way and reel!
And 'mid the silent sagamores,
In shining cuish and casque of steel,
Before them all
Stands bright and tall,
With gauntlet clenched and helmet vised,
The calm knight-errant of the Christ;
Then, in sign miraculous,
Levels his arquebus
And, charged with bullets from his bandoleer,
Looses the bolt of preternatural thunder.
A sachem falls: the wild men stare in wonder
And mazèd fear;
Once more his engine peals, and hurls the fire
Whose flash shall kindle continents to ire.

IV

*Like sanguine clouds at sunset spread
The ages slumber round thy head,
Ticonderoga!
Tremendous forms
Loom in their dreams:
Through levin-light of starless storms,
By giant fords of chartless streams,
Saxon and Gaul*

*Wrestle and rise and fall,
Conquering the region aboriginal.
Hark! From the long tides of Lake George,
What rolling drum-beat rumbles through thy
gorge,
Ticonderoga?*

O why should woman weep for war?
Or man — why should it vex him more?
Or why beside so sweet a shore
Dreadful should the drum be?
O clear the snorting trumpets neigh,
And blithe the squealing bagpipes play!
O red the redcoats on the bay,
Sailing with Abercromby!

A thousand bateaux floating glide
And flaunt their banners sheen;
Calm isles swim by on the summer tide
Clad in their birchen green.

Lord Howe he lies on a rude bearskin
Beneath the pleasant sky;
Says: Never day hath fairer been
For one's dear land to die.

Says: Tell me true now, gallant Stark,
What trail may foil the Frenchmen?

Where should our redcoats disembark
To rout Montcalm his henchmen?

A trout-brook once I fished, Lord Howe,
To fry my catch in bacon:
Along that trail, Sir, I'll allow
Ticonderoga's taken.

O what so wildly fair as war!
From dancing skiff and dripping oar
Land down on yonder dreamy shore
And drowsy let the drum be.
O proud as life the far crag's flush!
And sweet as youth — the hermit-thrush!
O deep as death the dark wood's hush,
Marching with Abercromby!

Our trail grows blind, good Putnam: draw
More close your forest rangers.
By yonder balsam [hark!] I saw —
Who calls there — friends or strangers?

A mile hence runs a mill, Lord Howe:
Might be the Frenchers sawing;
Or likely, Sir, ye heard yon crow
Round Roger's Rock a-cawing.

Qui vive? Their muskets flare the wood;
 Français! Their wild cheers start:
Lord Howe is dropt down where he stood,
 A hot ball through his heart.

They drive them back, they drown their boast
 In blood and the rushing river,
But the heart of Abercromby's host —
 The Lord of Hosts deliver!

Said is prayer and sung is psalm;
In the moonlight waits Montcalm.
Felled is tree and sunk is trench;
On their ramparts rest the French.
Moon is waned and night is gone,
And the plateau, in the dawn,
Strown with strange gigantic wrack,
Bristles like a wild boar's back,
Horrid shagg'd with monstrous spines
Of splintered oaks and tangled pines.
Where last night the setting sun
Placid forest looked upon,
In its place the sunrise sees
Rubble heaps of writhen trees,
Boughs — that hid the shy bird's nest —
Sharpened for a soldier's breast.

Hot soars the sun: in dove-white swarms
Cluster the dazzling uniforms
Along the earthworks; distant shines
The vanguard of the English lines.
Scarlet from the sombre firs
They start like sudden tanagers,
And smoothly sweep the open glade
Toward the abatis. There, waylaid,
They flounder midst the galling heap
Of tumbled branches, where they leap
And crawl, as 'mid some huge morass,
Like locusts in storm-beaten grass.
The looming breastworks now they see
But still no foemen. Suddenly,
Blinding the noon, a dusk of smoke
Blooms, and the roaring air hath broke
In hurricanes of scorching hail,
Through which, to dying eyes that quail,
Falls the round sun — a fiery grail.

Vive le Roi! rings from the wall
Of flame: *Vive notre Général!*

Choked by the fury and the fire,
The rended English ranks suspire
A moment's pause, then maddened rush
Stifling through the giant brush
Where, trapped in pits of jagged spars,

Rangers and yelling regulars
Struggle to shoot and strain to see
The blithe and viewless enemy.

Vive le Roi! shrilly the call
Rings clear: *Vive notre Général!*

Whirled from the zigzag bastion's scarp,
The hellish crossfire weaves its warp.
Thrice they return, and thrice again:
Image of God! and are these men
With eyes upturned in sightless stare,
Glazed with the dead hate that they glare:
And one, with dumb mouth, shouts in death
To one the red blood strangleth,
And one, outstretched with woful brow,
Hangs spiked upon a greenwood bough,
Wrought in a sculptured agony
Like Him that died upon a tree.

The soul of Abercromby's host
Follows Lord Howe — his shining ghost:
On stormy ridge and parapet
It rides in flame, it leads them yet;
Smiling, with wistful image wan,
A dead man leads the dying on.
And Campbell, Laird of Inverawe,
Hath met the doom his dream foresaw;

Pierced by his murdered kinsman's eyes,
His clansmen bear him where he dies.

Lord Howe, Lord Howe, why shouldst thou
fall !

Thy life it was the life of all ;
Thy death ten thousand hath undone.
England hath sunken with the sun.
Ticonderoga's lost and won !

O women, weep ye yet for war ?
Bugles and banners, flaunt no more !
For some be sleeping by the shore
In slumber dark, and some be
Awake in fever's roaring gorge,
And some, in crowded keels that forge
Southward, curse heaven and Lake George,
Flying with Abercromby !

V

*Still round thy brow the riven war-clouds range,
Ticonderoga :
The conquest marches though the colors change.
And now, where revolution's lightnings run,
Beyond the battle-smoke, sublime and wan,
Quivers the patient star of Washington.
Ranger 'gainst regular,*

*Sundered in enmity,
Opens thine ancient scar
Newly — for liberty.
Now with a rushing noise
Burst freedom's fountains
Where the green-forest boys
March from their mountains.
Listen! What wheedling fife
Quickens thy smouldering memories to life,
Ticonderoga?*

We're marching for to take the fort
With Ethan — Ethan Allen,
That when with fight he fills a quart
He ups and gulps a gallon.
Double-quick it! faster! — hep!
Lord! his blood is brandy.
Mind the music and the step,
And hold your muskets handy.

Friends and fellow soldiers — halt!
Mind your P's, you noodle!
What mother's son will earn his salt
And dance to Yankee Doodle?
There stands Ticonderoga: state
What now ye mean to do there.
Yon's the fortress' wicket-gate:
How many will march through there?

As many now as volunteer
 Poise your firelocks ! — Right, Sir !
Each man has swung his musket clear,
 Each man files off to fight, Sir.
The British sentry points his gun,
 And Ethan hears him click it ;
He fires : the Yankees yell ‘ Come on ! ’
 And thunder through the wicket.

They thunder through the barracks court
 And ram the British mortars. —
What rag-tail rebels make such sport
 In great King George’s quarters ? —
King George’s style is over, Sir !
 You redcoats wear the wrong dress :
Ground arms to the great Jehovah, Sir,
 And the Continental Congress !

VI

*Thine eyes grow dreamy in the evening haze,
 Ticonderoga.
Where, in mimic art
Ephemeral,
Thy pilgrims hold their part
In festival,
On what eternal pageants dost thou gaze,
 Ticonderoga ?*

Soldier and saint and sagamore
Are vanished from my tranquil shore.
The ripples that the summer breeze
Awakes — they are my reveries;
The day-fly dartles where below
The *Royal Savage* hides her woe,
And where the silver lake-trout ply
Arnold still grapples with Sir Guy.
On Mount Defiance, looming proud,
Glowers Burgoyne — a twilight cloud,
In whose spent shower's radiance
Macdonough fights the *Confiance*.

Battles whose blood is liberty,
Heroes whose dreams are history,
Imagination hath them wrought,
Tempering all things to a thought,
Painting the land, the lake, the sky,
With pageants of the dreamer's eye.

So by my visionary shore,
Soldier and saint and sagamore
Live in my shadow evermore:
Where, rapt in beauty, sleeps Champlain,
Lulled are the passion and the pain;
The legend and the race remain.

TENNYSON ¹

I

SONG keeps no dim centennial
Where one who sang lies hushed in earth,
And Beauty wears not death nor birth
Though lovers bring her flower and pall;

While Life itself, in endless youth,
Is sown along sidereal deeps,
From darkness, where the dreamer sleeps,
Trembles the morning-star of Truth.

Not to the singer, but to Song
That lights with viewless finger-tips
Her flaming music at his lips,
Those immortalities belong.

Yet to the singer, for the sake
Of austere service lowly lent
To make his mind her instrument,
The flower and pall of song we take.

¹ Written to be read before the Brooklyn Institute, 1909, in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

II

Among the mighty island-choir
His 'earliest pipe' was faintly heard
When still the hearts of time were stirred
With revolutionary fire,

While lights and echoes still were blown
Across the darkening lyric sky
Of Shelley's shrilling ecstasy
And Byron's orphic organ-tone.

He watched the shuddering Age, aghast,
Behold the sphinx of Science grow
A lion vigilant, and throw
Its shadow o'er the golden past,

Assuming slow an awful Shape
That stood impassive at the feast,
Revealing man a mystic beast —
The evolution of an ape.

Still shy he sought his shunning Muse
Remote from sceptic clash and curse,
And mixed the palette of his verse
With nature's mellow gleams and hues,

And crowned his rhyme with bloom of fern
In fiery orchid palaces,
And caught in crystal chalices
Bright spillings from a Grecian urn ;

Till, touched by human lover's hand,
The singer rose to larger thought
And took the spurs of Lancelot
And galloped into Fairyland.

But most of olden fair romance
Is rust on Reason's shining shield,
And Merlin's hand is weak to wield
The wand of Science' necromance.

And soon the mage of modern rhyme
Poured all his alchemy of art
In newer purpose — to impart
The noble doubtings of his time ;

And sped the Mediæval ghost
Of faith, and hailed the love of all,
The lessening individual,
The kingly 'common sense of most' ;

And watched, with keen prophetic scan,
Wild lightnings from the embattled crew
Of 'navies grappling in the blue'
Quenched by 'the Parliament of Man.'

Thus on his centenary page
The Muse has scrolled his name with hers:
A Prince of old Artificers,
Knight-errant of the Newest Age.

The poet pales in memory —
Aloof and proud and book-bemused,
His Saxon plainness subtly fused
With pomp of Norman chivalry;

His ashes in the Abbey lie
Aristocratic in their place,
But all that lives of him has grace
Of beautiful democracy;

Near mouldering glaive and oriflamme
His cerements rest, but he, unwound
From death, by human love is crowned
With friendship *in memoriam*;

By many a far and alien beach
He seeks the holy grail of song,
Hailed by the Saxon-thinking throng
The laureate of English speech.

III

O Song — O Grail of man's desire !
O living Splendor, never sped !
Out of the ashes of the dead
Rise, rise once more in mystic fire !

Reveal for us, for us, reveal
The Singer in his harness clad,
And gird him forth like Galahad
To smite, to chasten and to heal ;

To hallow spear and spade and hod,
To wrestle manhood from defeats,
To face the mighty in their seats
And humble greatness before God ;

To be the bugle of his race
And blazon through the age again
Thy music in the hearts of men,
Thy beauty in the market-place.

THE AIR VOYAGE UP THE HUDSON¹

LIKE nothing earthly, on awful wings,
 It burst on the staring million,
Like a dream of ancient dreadful things
 In the dusk of the time reptilian.

Our hearts beat quick; we spoke not aloud;
 Our minds our senses dissuaded;
As we saw the bastions of bird and cloud
 By the vision of man invaded.

We caught our breath, as we watched him bound
 Where the air-billow swirls and serries,
And the shout of our straining hearts is drowned
 In the din of the roaring ferries.

With sliding pinion and whizzing prow —
 His sky-ship the sea birds scaring —
Like a thought from Liberty's looming brow,
 He flashes and soars in his daring.

¹ Stanzas written on witnessing, from Battery Park, the first flight made by Wilbur Wright in his aeroplane from Governor's Island to Grant's Tomb and back, on the morning of October 4, 1909, during the Hudson-Fulton celebrations.

22 THE AIR VOYAGE UP THE HUDSON

He has flashed; he is gone: only fancy aids
Our eyes where the haze grows hoarer:
The Ages look up from the Palisades,
That looked down on the Dutch explorer.

But what of their dreams — those gray steel hulks
Deep-moored in the river below him,
With the loins of a nation girt in their bulks?
In their iron hearts, do they know him?

Do their deadly engines twinge with a doubt,
A dread of this thing ethereal,
That hides in its plumes the earliest scout
Of the armies and navies aerial?

And what of their hearts — that human throng?
Do they hail in this creature regal
The harbinger of dirge, or of song?
A vulture, or an eagle?

He tacks; he returns: the news is blown
On the winds of a city's wonder:
He comes, in the braying megaphone,
He comes, on Manhattan's thunder;

He looms once more by the swarming bluffs —
A bird of marshes gigantic —
And slants on the slumbering mist, and luffs
To his nest by the booming Atlantic.

CHORAL SONG FOR THE NEW THEATRE ¹

(Written to be sung to music from Gounod's *Redemption*.)

AWAKE! awake! awake!
Spirits of Aspiration!
And hasten to renew
Your ministering vows:
For lo! the Prince of Faery
Returns within your walls,
Back from his ancient bright dominions:
Awake! awake! awake!
For he is crowned again.

But who is he, the Prince of Faery?
Of Hellas he was god, a swan he was in Avon.
But who is he, the Prince of Faery?
Of little children lord, of men and angels
master:

Within the human mind he rules the world.

¹ Sung by members of the Metropolitan Opera Company, at the ceremony of the laying of the corner-stone of the New Theatre, New York, December 15, 1908, and also at the opening ceremonies, November 6, 1909.

ODE TO THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES ¹

HARVARD PHI BETA KAPPA POEM, 1908

I

ONCE more amid her mountains and her seas
American, dream-startled Liberty
Stares round her, listening. From her mystic
limbs
Sleep like a garment slips;
Between her lips
Bright wonder trembles momentarily;
About her knees
Her ancient streams and shores, innumerable
With navies and strange peoples, raise new
hymns
In her immortal name. Once more she lifts
Her head in proud resistance, beautiful
Rebellion: yet not now with martial frown
To glare through scorching rifts
Of cannon smoke, smiting her foemen down,

¹ Read in Sanders Theatre, Cambridge, June 25, 1908.

But now, with gaze upturned in the deep sky
 Whose timeless arc reveals each mortal blur
 Of her bright image overhanging her,
 To purify herself, for her least worshipper.

II

Ours is an age of mutability,
 A threshold radiant yet sinister
 Toward strange horizons, where the eternal hills
 Of ancient law heave, and sink shuddering under,
 Bursting in giant surf against the base
 Of vastier summits, newly starred with wonder;
 And though that portent thrills
 Our thoughts with dread, or joy, here is our place;
 Here we must look our common future in the face.

Necessity sounds no alarms, and time
 No tocsin for his patient siege. To-day
 No detonation of deep Sumter's gun,
 Nor lightning musket-flash of Lexington,
 Nor jangled steeple-chime,
 Ushers our holy war; but silent-shod,
 And in the secret way
 Of human hearts, where in the sordid street
 The modern slave and master dumbly meet
 And in the other's eyes

26 ODE TO THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Each, unaware, beholds the eyes of God,
That ever after burn and scrutinize
The vitals of his soul; or where, defiled,
The starless miner barter his own child
For mordant drink to quench his questioning
mind;
Or where, behind
The squandered toil of millions, the impeach'd
man
Puts out his life, to shut away the shame;
Still silent as the flame
Of serpent fire through autumn grass,
The radiant revolution creeps,
Impregnating the nation's prone morass
With seed Promethean
That, kindling, leaps
Forth on the peaks of life, aspiring whence it
came.

What is that seed? — that living fire?

What mystic name,

What secret shrine,

Revealed, sets free

That sweet and awful Potency,

Which wears, 'neath blasphemy and ire,

'Neath pain and sin and hate and blood,

The hallowed smile of brotherhood?

A myriad names, a myriad
 Shrines its worshippers have had,
 Yet whatsoever god men call it by,
 Still the divine
 Democracy of man, while man is, cannot die.

Hearken how far
 The high persuasion
 Of our renascence thunders! Groping, dumb,
 Bowed with old burdens of a continent,
 Branded with immemorial scar
 Of sheik and king and khan and czar,
 They come — they come,
 Filing, in vast and orderly invasion,
 The planks of Ellis Island. Who shall tell
 What numbers thronged the fields where great
 Martel
 Marshalled his hordes, or old Arminius
 O'erwhelmed the Roman legions? — Gaul and
 Hun,
 Vandal and Visigoth, behold, for us
 To-day the humdrum agent, one by one,
 By sex and ages,
 Chalk-marks and checks, and down the bright
 steel cages
 Passes the hybrid clans,
 Whose migratory hosts pour forth — Americans.

III

Præsides et socii collegiorum!

Masters and scholars of the chosen places!

I ask of you — to whom

Shall those inchoate freemen, dazzled races,

Turn in their promised land for leadership?

Who shall equip

Their hope with discipline, their nescience

With light, their sudden zeal with reverence?

I ask of you — to whom

The amazed Republic, gazing on this skein

And stuff of destiny,

Pied-shot with human passion, joy and pain,

Shall look to engineer the awful loom,

So that within the fabric of the state

The large ideal of the intricate

Design shall blazon, bold and beautiful,

The gracious lineaments of Liberty?

Flower-sprung from mesas of the prairied land,

Star-strewn along the hills and by the seas —

The quiet-bastioned citadels of peace

And gunless fortresses of freedom — stand

The universities. No breastwork heaves

Its brow in menace near; the ivied gates

Rise moatless; from the campus and the eaves

Perennial youthhood chimes; and all awaits

The coming conqueror. Yet inward shrined,
 And panoplied
 With arms more glorious than glaive of Cid
 Or Charlemagne, the quenchless human mind
 Sits inexpugnable;
 While far around, from swarming cities and wide
 swards,
 Murmur the vague, aspiring, passion-driven
 hordes.

Let us not vest with visionary seal
 Of sanctity the individual.
 Wherever among men
 The brave and reasonable citizen
 Thinks for the common weal
 And speaks his thought, there the Republic speaks,
 Yet, if unanswered, speaks in vain.

For ours is a day of coalition: this
 Our people, viewed with the perspective eye
 Of revery, appears a titan group
 Of powers compositive, vast Dramatis
 Personæ, plying their immortal tasks,
 'Neath which their Atlantean sinews stoop,
 In that high Comedy Serene
 Wherein the Evolutionary will immasks;
 And there, amid those titan forms of Man —

Their torsos poisèd proud
 In athlete ease, their foreheads pensive-bow'd —
 The Spirits of the Universities
 Enact their corporate rôles American.

Therefore to you, lords of the large demesne
 Of learning, scholars of well-earned degrees,
 To you, in your confederated power,
 Preëminently, the Republic turns
 And charges you, by your just love of her,
 To lead, to pilot and uplift
 Her generations, and administer,
 With the most holy shrift
 Of reason and Time's slow amassed dower,
 Her bright communion to the multitude.

Toward you, in whose calm hands her chalice
 burns
 With beauty strange, how many thirst-imbued
 Gaze, yearning! Not alone on your own walls,
 Wherein your chosen meet — your shadow falls
 Also on alien thresholds, thrown across
 The nation's childhood, by the increasing glow
 Of truth that flares beyond you. As you sow,
 So shall the lesser seekers harvest — dross
 Or substance. In responsibility,
 You are the true inheritors of kings

Whose sceptres now lie impotent, your halls —
 The sovran courts of the democracy;
 And by the royalty
 Conferred of patient high imaginings,
 Your first prerogative —
 And prime efficiency — is leadership.

IV

Who is the scholar-leader? What is he
 Whose learning shows the unlearned best to live?

There be, who — finger hard on lip —
 Pore lifelong, with laborious glass,
 On nature's enigmatic heart,
 Dissecting shrewdly, part by part,
 To store her secrets in their scrip,
 Heedless of human love and art,
 Or how the passionate generations pass.

Others there are who, moved no less
 To explore that mute obscure abysm,
 Make of their probing minds a prism
 Whose many-sided radiance
 Illumes with their own hearts the heart of Nature,
 Touching her darkest feature
 With revelation for man's happiness,
 And with love's couchèd lance
 Wresting from Science a new Humanism.

Such is the scholar liberal: for him,
 Not knowledge which ignores the Whole,
 But knowledge grafted in the soul
 Is scholarship; to esteem
 His calling justly is to see
 That culture is proficient sympathy.

For all that issues beautiful
 From dim retort and crucible,
 And makes our modern day to seem
 Arabian night or opiate dream: —
 Genii, that on the wireless air
 Transport within imagined waves
 The cosmic Echo from her caves
 To work their will, or from the stars
 Expound the mysteries of Mars,
 Or in earth's rotting shale prepare
 The alchemy of radium, —
 All powers, articulate or dumb,
 Which scholars probe and sages scan,
 Are meaningless except to Man —
 To urge his peace, to ease his pain,
 And from his mind's domain
 To exorcise the lurking Caliban.

To exorcise! — Not in the Middle Age,
 With Faust's redemption, did the devils cease
 To lure great doctors to their tutelage,

Whereby to lengthen their protracted lease
 Of the lewd rabble's gaping ignorance:
 Still, with incessant metamorphosis,
 The monsters hatch and hiss
 And, breeding, grow
 To honor'd stature in the imperil'd state,
 Where the true scholar still is Prospero,
 Making their misshaped natures dance
 Attendance on his master vision: So
 To humble monsters to the use of men,
 The foremost scholar is first citizen.

He, when the rank broods teem and generate
 Their giant seed,
 That prowl the rich land with impunity,
 Where corporate greatness stoops to cormorant
 greed,
 And that one bulk, much-mouth'd and subtle-
 gin'd,
 The unsated Minotaur, Monopoly,
 Extorts his toll in the meek nation's blood
 Of boys and maidenhood, —
 He then, the scholar-leader, pores not stale
 Upon his book, nor peers where sits the wind
 In the golden weathercock on Minos' gate,
 But prescient, girds his clear mind all in mail,
 And gathering round the time's unperished youth,

34 ODE TO THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Apportions his bright armory of truth
And points what right-aimed blow shall make the
beast disgorge.

So did that steadfast captain of our race —
A storm-trained scholar — stand at Valley Forge
With all the gales of England in his face,
And sharing forth his visionary arms
Of faith with his shorn comrades, smiled, and
hurled
Victory through disaster's blind alarms,
And wrought with fearless mind the future of a
world.

V

O beautiful and spacious one,
My Country! Spirit free,
Who floatest wild on that lone eagle's wings
Fledged in the fiery heart of Washington,
And fed on heart's blood of each dauntless son
Of that strong father, how exceedingly
Fair is thine image, when
First the least-born of men
Burns with thy story! Then
Thou art a presence never darkling: night
Shrouding thy solemn flight,
Sprinkles, with hoary rite,

Stars on thy plumage; morn,
 Ere on the cottage thorn
 Scarce the shy warbler sings,
 Fills all familiar things
 With thy far glory; dreams
 Of thee at evening haunt the hermit thrush,
 And in his ecstasy's pure after-hush,
 High and austere sweet, thine immanent eagle
 screams.

So by the large compulsion of that Presence
 I make this invocation;
 And by the might of that dear name, whose es-
 sence
 The staling tongue of usage cannot taint —
 America — I speak, that I may stir
 You, her far-ranging universities,
 Through glad constraint
 Of love you owe to her,
 Henceforward to conjoin your destinies
 In grander federation.

VI

Not adversaries in the scrambling street
 Of commerce, need your nobler wills compete
 For numbers and for names. A saner law
 Moves your coöperation, and the awe

Of that shall fix a sound stability
 At the base of civic freedom. Strong must be
 The scholar in himself. Far better were it
 Your halls stood empty and their corridors
 Silent, than that the youth who from your doors
 Go forth to breed the nation, should inherit
 The sowings of that spirit
 Which bows the mind to serve the vulgar mood,
 Or truckles to the man that owns the multitude.

It cannot be. Never, till now, before —
 In age of Plato or of Abelard,
 In empire or republic, linking shore
 With shore by aspiration's viewless chain —
 Has your high calling held the fair regard
 And faith of one vast people. Not in vain
 Their faith abides in you. The taint which blinds
 The weak shall not be yours. Your yards and
 halls

Still with expanding splendor shall be filled
 By the strong magnet of the sane ideal,
 And to the common weal
 Shall speed their generations of glad youth
 Forth in the land — alumni of the guild
 Of leadership, the minute-men of truth,
 Whose muskets are their uncorrupted minds,
 Clean for their country where her service calls.

VII

Nobly our world renews, even as in ages gone.
Man's eras have their vernal equinox
No less than nature's: Still, on that wild dawn
When the high winds, unleashed, no longer fawn
At Winter's knees, but lift his sparse-blown locks
In haggard wrack — there, on the looming hills,
Sharp with unearthly light, the sudden flocks
Show radiant, and on the vista'd sills
Of Spring, earth's visionary beauty starts
Revealed: Not otherwise in human hearts
Recurrent, after seasons numb and blind,
Freshly the ancient Loveliness reveals
 The love of our own kind,
Rekindling in our race the raptures of the mind.

PROLOGUE TO THE SAINT-GAUDENS MASQUE ¹

PERFORMED AT ASPET IN CORNISH

Enter IRIS

IRIS

FRESH from the courts of dewy-colored eve
Jove summons me before you. Who I am
And why he bids me here I must declare.

¹ In June, 1905, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Cornish Colony by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, an outdoor masque was devised and performed by his neighbors in a pine grove at Aspet, his New Hampshire home. In the Masque, written by Mr. Louis Evan Shipman, more than seventy persons took part, among whom were some forty artists and writers of craftsmanly repute, who enacted rôles of Greek deities and demigods.

About twilight, the sculptor with his family and some hundreds of guests were seated in front of a green-gray curtain, suspended between two pines, on which hung great gilded masks, executed by Mr. Maxfield Parrish. Close by, secreted artfully behind evergreens, members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra awaited the baton signal of Mr. Arthur Whiting, conductor and composer of the music.

Then, in the softened light, emerged from between the folds of the curtain the tall maidenly figure of Iris, in many-hued diaphanous veils, holding in one hand a staff of living fleur-de-lis. Iris, enacted by Miss Frances Grimes, the sculptress, spoke the accompanying Prologue.

The three allusions to works by Saint-Gaudens refer, of course, to the Shaw Memorial Bas-relief, in Boston, the Sherman Equestrian Statue, in New York, and the Adams Memorial, in Washington.

My home is half-light; you have watched me
oft

Through closing lids at noontide, or at dusk,
Moving between the daylight and your dreams,
A shape illusory. Whether I pause
Midway my quivering arc, that spans the roar
And tumbling prisms of sheer Niagara,
Or by the ferny banks of Blowmedown
Trellis my hair with braided fleur-de-lis,
Still I am Iris, and my mission is
To shatter the white beam of garish day
Into a thousand mellower tints of twilight,
Spinning across the sceptic eyes of reason
Fine rainbow-films of fancy. Such, then, I.
But whence, emerging from the curtained wood
Of Aspet, on this longest summer eve,
While yet the veerie rings his vesper chimes,
I have made journey hither, hearken !

Late,

Below the gilded state-house by the bay,
Sitting his horse in proud simplicity,
I left a young commander; thronged beneath
His lifted brow, clouded with battle dreams,
The eager Ethiop faces onward surged;
No sound arose from all their trampling feet,
But the imagined drum-beats rolled in bronze.

From these I passed to where the human hives
Shadow the stars from the Metropolis,
Whence, turning homeward from the hell of war,
Another hero, scarr'd and old, there rode;
And at his bridle-rein, in maiden awe,
Went Victory — with pity in her eyes.

A third and Sibyl form, remote and mute,
Brooding alone beside a secret grave,
Asked with unopening eyes, "What means it all?"

From these imagined and immortal forms
To him, O mortals, who imagined them,
And fixed his revery in stone and bronze,
I come to render tribute, not of praise
Superfluous, but playful badinage
And mock-Olympic mummery, whereby
If these shall cause the elvish Gallic smile
To twitch his lip, or stir his blarney laugh,
The mock-Olympians will die content.

Behold, then, by the enchantment of this staff
A magic transformation: not such change
As once my goddess sister Circe wrought —
Circe, whose spell debased the forms divine
Of men to bristled shapes of snout and horn:
Mine is a charm reverse, that lifts, not lowers,
By power whereof all neighbor Jacks and Jills

That tug their art-pails up these pasture slopes
Of Cornish are converted here to strut
In guise of antic gods and demigods.

[IRIS waves her staff, music sounds from the grove.]

Hark now ! 'Tis they, who clamor to begin
Their frolic masque of satyr, muse, and faun,
And on the shrine of mirth make sacrifice
In honor of their only pagan saint.

[IRIS withdraws between the curtains: the music
grows louder, then dies away. The curtains,
dividing, open upon the Masque.]

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

KEEP closer to the wall; stop crawling; wait.
We have our orders. Hold the dynamite.
I hear their sentry cough. The moon burns white
Behind the battlements, and cuts each one —
Turret and tower — an inky silhouette,
Like paper castle-tops I used to trace
With scissors as a boy. Step softly! Place
The bomb here, underneath the garrison.
Now if their souls are dreaming of hell-fire,
This will not wake them. Midnight! That's
the choir
Of children hailing the Nativity.

*What are ye that walk the night
Heaven's will divining?
Shining are your mantles white
And your staffs are shining.*

*Shepherds, we have come from far
Dark and danger scorning:
We have seen our King His star
By the gates of morning.*

Come now, this is no time for hands to quake;
On this one breach depends the victory,
A nation's honor, and her destiny.
And these, who lie so unsuspectingly
In sleep, not one of them must ever wake
This side of —

*What is He whose star ye seek,
Toilsomely and slowly?
He is monarch of the meek,
Regent of the lowly.*

*Wise men, seek another land,
Shun our lord his greeting:
For we perish at his hand,
And our lambs are bleating.*

What a devilish close call!
There creeps the sentry on the shadow-wall
Like a black ant. Quick, now — the fuse!

*What are ye who knock by night
On my palace portals?
Triple wreaths of silver light
Crown you like immortals.*

*Herod, from the east we bring
Fine and lordly treasure.
Where is He that born is King?
We would do him pleasure.*

*These your gifts uncover them,
Myrrh and spice, before me.
Lo, I am Jerusalem!
Bow ye down, adore me!*

*King, your shepherds wretchedly
Starve without your city.
You Jerusalem may be,
But our Lord is Pity.*

Quick, fool!

This is our country's job, and you her tool.
What are you waiting for? You want to think
Before you kill? You dream that love may link
All born of woman? Fool, are we the first
To live in mothers' memories accurst,
Or in the little children's helplessness?
These men, like us, know gentle eyes that bless
Their goings and homecomings, baby hands
That reach, fine feet that dart, at their commands.
What, then? This is not murder; this is war.
We are not men, but patriots. Think no more:
The fuse is lighted; run! Run for the shore!

*What are ye that screen your eyes
From the awful burning?
Look where 'neath His star He lies,
Nestled by her yearning.*

*Ye that saw His glory shine,
What were dark and danger?
Blessed ye that make your shrine
Mother, Child, and manger.*

Now the Lord of Love —

Look back! Look back! How the torn earth-
clouds blot

The stars, and the far hilltop heaves the roar!

Ah, *Merry Christmas!* Almost I'd forgot.

THE DEATH OF VERESTCHAGIN¹

WITH gaze serene and brow of silver rime,
He watched the up-staring sea and reeling
land

Converge, as limned beneath the veteran hand
That last, fell sketch of war was traced sublime;

But even in the act his pencil ruthlessly
Was snatched away, where — blasting all his
view —

The inexorable Artist stood, and drew
The awful masterpiece — reality.

And now the silver rime is on the wave,
And Verestchagin sleeps with Makarof,
And calm, above the red brine's eddying
trough,

The eyes of Christ and Buddha guard his grave.

¹ Vassili Verestchagin, the Russian painter of war themes, while sketching a naval battle off Port Arthur, sank in the warship *Petropavlovsk*, with Admiral Makarof, April 4, 1904.

SHIRLEY COMMON ¹

Nor ours, upon the house-tops, here to claim
Battles and heroes of historic scene,
A century and fifty years of fame: —
Our boast is silence and this day's serene.

The loud circumference of jangling lands,
Conflict and craft and wrong surround us; still
Shy in her orchard-wildness Shirley stands:
A hushed spectator on her mapled hill.

Here to her simple festival she calls
Her folk home — yet not all: Where are they now,
The Pilgrim race that piled her corn-field walls,
And served the Lord with patience and a plough?

The hardy citizens that now are sod
They may not hear her summons home; and yet
The elm-hid belfry nestles toward their God,
And we, who gather here, do not forget.

¹ Read at the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Town of Shirley, Massachusetts, July 30, 1903, in the First Parish Meeting-House.

For still the sights familiar to their eyes
Are dear to ours: the spires of Groton blaze
Their weathercocks from Gallows-Hill's sunrise,
And the long slopes of Harvard slant in haze;

And still, at night, the bittern booms to rest,
The secret whip-poor-will complains afar;
And still Wachusett marshals in the west
The sunset and his solitary star.

Here, then, let thoughts be memories; let our
 pride
Be the untainted loveliness, which is
Our Shirley's dower on woods and pastures pied;
Let our ambition, even as hers, be this: —

Unenvious, to win the envied bays
Of nature's health and honest common sense;
And, by the peace of sane, inglorious days,
To earn the unrepute of innocence.

ISAAK WALTON IN MAIDEN LANE

IN that Manhattan alley long yclept,
With gentle olden music, *Maiden Lane*,
Where sick and sad-eyed Traffic scarce has slept
Even at midnight, in her lust for gain,
Rolling in restive pain
Through the stern vigil of a century,
There, mid the din of harsh reality —
The newsboy's shriek, car's clang and huckster's
 chaff,
The cobble's roar, and the loud drayman's laugh,
And the dull stare,
The inhuman, hunted glare
Of the faces — the gray faces
Of Mammon's stark-mad races,
Sordid and slattern,
Modish and tattern,
Loveless in their misery —
There, in the midst of all,
Seated upon a stall,
Musing on meadows, Isaak, I met thee! —

How my heart stopped for too much happiness,
To meet thee there in that maelstrom of men,
Benignant, wise and calm ! Ah, gently then
Came back, in fancy's dress,
All that of old was sweet,
Serene and fair, to grace the garish street.
Musing on meadows now in Maiden Lane,
The turbid current surging at my side
Became the flow of 'Thames' sequestered tide,
The newsboy's cry waned to a curlew's call,
The jangling pedlar tended tinkling sheep
Along green hedgerows; even the drayman's
brawl

Sweetened to an old soliloquy, till all
That strident world has chastened to a sleep
Where, in a twilit eddy of my dream,
Thine image, Isaak, pored upon a bream.

THE SISTINE EVE

**FRAGMENTS OF AN ORATORIO
WRITTEN FOR THE BEGINNING
OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

PLAN

OVERTURE

PRELUDE

FIRST CANTO: *The Birth of Eve*

FIRST INTERLUDE

SECOND CANTO: *The Temptation of Eve*

SECOND INTERLUDE

THIRD CANTO: *The Birth of Man*

PRESENCES ¹

SPEAKING PRESENCES: *The Sistine Spirit*
The Spirit of the Vatican

SOLO PRESENCES: *Adam*
The Persian Sibyl
The Cumæan Sibyl
The Delphic Sibyl
Judith
Goliath
Jonas
Jeremiah
Isaiah
The Expelling Angel
Eve

CHORAL PRESENCES: *The Cornice Cherubim*
Symbolic Figures
Botticelli's Women
Shapes in "The Last Judgment"

SCENE

The Sistine Chapel, Rome

TIME

Midnight, before the Dawn of 1901

High pontifical mass is being celebrated. Cardinals and prelates in splendid vestments, assembled.

¹ *These Dramatis Personæ are figures in the paintings by Michelangelo and Botticelli on the ceiling and walls of the Sistine Chapel.*

*“La forza d’ un bel volto al ciel mi sprona
[Ch’ altro in terra non è che mi diletta]
E vivo ascendo tra gli spirti eletti,
Grazia ch’ ad uom mortal raro si dona.*

*Sì ben col suo fattor l’ opra consuona,
Ch’ a lui mi levo per divin concetti,
E quivi informo i pensier tutti e i detti,
Ardendo, amando per gentil persona.*

*Onde, se mai da due begli occhi il guardo
Torcer non so, conosco in lor la luce
Che mi mostra la via ch’ a Dio mi guide.
E se nel lume loro acceso io ardo,
Nel nobil foco mio dolce riluce
La gioia che nel cielo eterna ride.”*

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI; Sonetto III.

OVERTURE

A VOICE FROM THE CHAPEL CEILING

SIBYLS and prophets of undying art,
Awake ! for Buonarrotti's golden dome
Is as an angel's passing-bell, to toll —
On midnight's starry, tingling silentness —
The interring of an Age. Wake and behold !
They bear her toward the never-shutting doors
Which fearful mortals screen with draperies
To bar the eternal night. — Lo, she has passed !
With bead and psalm and solemn catafalque,
With mitred state, and pomp episcopal,
The latest of the sovereigns of time —
Nineteenth among the entombèd centuries —
Has sealed forever her pregnant lips, and lies
Sculptured in the cold clay of history.

But thou, O live new-crowned Herculean Age,
Who clingest to the rugged breast of Labor,
Gazing with wonder in calm Science' eyes,
While Poesie, with warm tears on her cheek,
Searches thy look, in passion lost of pathos, —
Thou titan child of promise, hail to thee !

And while these spirits, with their serene eyes
Of strifeless beauty and strong consummation
[Spirits that pass not with the passing age]
Chant o'er thine earliest breathing, may the hymn
Which they shall lift in prayer to the first Mother,
Be as an exhortation, to incite
Thy dreams to deeds in thy maturer days.

And now, while all the kneeling prelates pray,
Spirits, which are my voices, even as the stops
Are to the lute, awake your harmonies !
And celebrate the pain and the desire,
The daring and the victory, of her
Who set love's seal upon the centuries.

A VOICE FROM THE ALTAR

Of *her*? Of whom?

THE VOICE FROM THE CEILING

Awake, Divinities !

CHORUS OF PRESENCES

Thou whose form crepuscular
Dawns through the Sistine heaven, as a star
Through autumn twilight, beautiful
Our mother Eve —

THE VOICE FROM THE ALTAR

Peace, painted Forms ! Or if ye, who have sat
The mute spectators of my solemn Mass
For vague centennials of memory,
Now ope your lips inspired, let it not be
To chant amid these rites pontifical
A song of sacrilege. — Peace, painted Forms !

THE VOICE FROM THE CEILING

What art thou there below, with taper eyes
Upraised from many a prostrate cardinal,
Who puffest, from thy vast, seclusive cowl,
Columnar storms of incense ? Whose are thine
Imponderous and gilded limbs, which show —
Between the silky folds of surplices —
Like pillars, sculptured in a pagan shrine
Or pillaged Coliseum ?

THE VOICE FROM THE ALTAR

Answer thou !

What voice is thine, visible Aspiration,
Whose torse, half chiselled from cerulean cloud,
Outlifts the youthful arm indomitable
Of David, who at Florence guards the Palace,
While thy rapt brow hurls the time-piercing gaze

Of Moses, in St. Peter's-of-the-Chains?
What is thy name, majestic Grace of Power?

THE VOICE FROM THE CEILING

I am the Sistine Spirit. What art thou?

THE VOICE FROM THE ALTAR

The Spirit of the Vatican. My voice
Is the peal'd organ of perennial Rome,
And even as those sibyls are thy stops
So all these red and golden reeds are mine:
But now, until this sacred mass be said,
Be silent, thou! or let our requiem
Be sung in harmony.

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

What discord can
Arise, when Power prays to Innocence
And Beauty?

THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

None; but these, thy sensuous choir,
Dare to uplift their ritual to her —
To her, whose fluent and unstable mind,
Impregn'd with lust of new and gloss of beauty,
Became a fair conception-place for Satan;

To Eve, whose folly wrought the fall of Man,
Yea, all the dire resultance of his fall.

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Man never fell. The inexorable blow
Of the Expelling Angel was the stroke
Which first conferred God's knighthood on his
nature,
Kindling that anguish, whereby first he rose
To the protective stature of his soul.
This Eve first knew was so, when she loved Adam.
For it was she who first, feeling herself
A child of God, yearned in her little Eden,
Yearned for herself and Adam, as true lovers,
For aims beyond their summer-day self-seeking;
And even while she grasped the fateful fruit,
Smiled in the dream of nobler mortal sons
Instead of an idle immortality, —
Smiled, and then reached the fruit to Adam, so
To share with him the awful insurrection.

THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

Preposterous Spirit! does the fallen race
Of man fulfil her dream? Reveal to me
A nobler mortal son, whose angel stature
Exceeds his father Adam's ere his fall.

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Spirit of earthward vision, — even I !
 Yea, these and I and more than us are Man.
 Our exaltation doth confute his fall,
 And build again, in beauty, art and love,
 Another and inviolable Eden.

Speak ! ye serene and lofty Presences,
 Delineations of inspired Power !
 Awake ! ye children of a child of God,
 And hymn, with your chromatic harmonies,
 The prelude and the Trilogy austere,
 Wherein the intuitive grace of Woman's love
 Enacts the eternal Genesis of Man.

THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

Strange spirit, they are silent.

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Dost thou hear

No sound ?

THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

No sound ; save only the faint breath
 Of cardinals, that tell their rosaries.

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Hark ! — Hearest thou no mural melody ?
The playing organ of an ocular sense,
The hidden choristers of lovely hues,
The chant of heavenly forms ? — Once more, with
all
Thy breathless spirit listening in thine eyes —
No music ?

THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

None.

PRELUDE

CHORUS OF PRESENCES

O ye wise, love Beauty! All
Ye strong, revere her!
Through passion's starry arches thrill
The echoes of her light footfall;
The worlds, to do her deathless will,
Draw near her.

By ways divinely sensuous,
Her viewless form entices us
'Mid visions pale and passionate
To kneel beside her awful gate;
Where, girt with song and silences,
The lonely mind her mansion is.

The innocent obey her call,
The happy know her dreamy face
And hear her;
Despair is softened by her grace,
And sorrow is her worshipper.
All things that love grow like to her.
O ye wise, love Beauty! All
Ye strong, revere her.

FIRST SYMBOLIC FIGURE

Who draws his face beneath a cowl of cloud
And kneels beside the altar, dumb and bow'd ?

SECOND FIGURE

That is the Spirit of the Vatican :
He meditates upon the Fall of Man.

THIRD FIGURE

But what is he, with countenance beguil'd,
That smiles upon the sleeping titan-child ?

FOURTH FIGURE

The Sistine Spirit. — See ! he draws away
The incense-curtain from our holy play.

THE FIGURES

That all the enactments of our mural stage
May pass as dreams before the new-born Age.

FIRST CANTO: THE BIRTH OF EVE

SEMICHORUS OF SYMBOLIC FIGURES

How like a garden lies the world
The day when love is born;
Strange beauty glows upon old boughs,
Strange flowers conceal the thorn;
And noon and night are tinged with light
Of unfamiliar morn.

CHORUS

While with a sense — as though a god were near
it —
Of noble languor, droops the lover's spirit.

SEMICHORUS

So float the trembling hues around
This maid in Paradise.
A joy, a reticence, a prayer,
Clothe with bright poesies
Her meek limbs, where she worships there
In God the Father's eyes.

CHORUS

While, drawing deep from beauty's opiate springs
A sigh of power, recumbent Adam sings:

ADAM

As I lay in Eden,
Alone with Love and Lethargy,
An immortal maiden
Was conceived in heaven
And born to me.

All that I had dreamed
And sculptured from the cloud-lit skies, —
All that loved and gleamed
And sang, in my encircling Paradise, —

The summit's calm,
The flower's voluptuousness,
The forest's majesty,
Night's balm,
The morning's victory
And twilight's veiled melodiousness —
Became a glowing fire
In me and my desire.

As I lay in Eden,
My bosom was unfolded;

And an elemental Hand,
Swift, mysterious and grand,
 Culled that perfect maiden —
With all that my wild soul contained
Of passion peerless and unstained —
 As erst by heaven she was moulded.

And the maiden, in that place,
Grew before her Maker's face
To a form [methought I dreamed]
Which *was* what beauty only seemed.
And my lax arm limply pressed
To my warm and unnerved breast,
And my brow sank in a swoon,
And I smelt the scents of noon,
And I felt the faint winds straying,
And my heart could scarce conceive
What the Father's Voice was saying:
 "Adam, behold thine Eve!"

A FIGURE

Hush! — He is silent. Spirits, he has swooned;
And from his breast bright Eve has flowered forth;
As when the passion of the nightingale
Thrills and expands through his eternal arches,
Recumbent Rome feels the faun-blood of Nature
Leap in his limbs, while an imponderous rib

Of marble sloth from his immortal heart
Vast and invisibly is plucked away,
And from that rent — profuse of ecstasy,
Exhilarant of life and innocence,
Trailing bright incense for her naked glory —
 Outpours the Spring.

FIRST INTERLUDE

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

How fair he sleeps — this lordly child of Time !
In sleep, the soul is in its infancy
And Power a babe again. But soon the dawn
Will break, and he will rise to titan-stature.

Meanwhile, within the crystal of his slumber,
O'erhanging visions pass, as o'er a lake
The hues of sunset, sweeping across heaven,
Lay down their splendors in its placid heart,
And passing, leave no tremor on its face.

SECOND CANTO: THE TEMPTATION OF EVE

CHORUS OF THE CORNICE CHERUBIM

The Tree! — Behold the curtain-cloud is cleft!
The Tree, in all its pride and mystery!
And smiling on its left
Content and Innocence, Self-love and Leth-
argy;
And on its right,
Departing into night —
Anguish, Sin, Death, Love and Eternity!

A SYMBOLIC FIGURE

Sister of an Orient eld,
What read'st thou from that parchment, held
Close to thine eyes, as if thou spelled
Secrets from all else withheld,
Or as, at twilight, thou should squint to see
A form, that moves or stands beyond thy scrutiny?

THE PERSIAN SIBYL

I trace and read, in Time's obscure abysm, —
Where cold Imagination, like a prism,

Darts many-colored beams on the carved
walls, —
The subtle sorceries of scepticism.

I seek — and vainly through the centuries
I sought — a fire, which kindled never dies,
Like that which yonder, 'neath the darkling
Tree
Of Knowledge, burns in Eve's uplifted eyes.

THE FIGURE

Thou, loosened from whose sea-green veil
The auburn tresses lightly trail,
While soft thy mantle's azure pale
Floats round thee, like a filling sail,
Where rests *thy* dreamy gaze, as though, unfurl'd
On some Olympic height, it brooded o'er the world?

THE DELPHIC SIBYL

I dream (and in my dream, I smile)
Of a maid in Melos' isle —
How beautiful she was !
She kept no slave, she wore no crown,
But all the gods from heaven looked down
To see her pass.

Her brow was calm, her limbs were free;
The might of her simplicity

To men seemed more than human :
A Deity ! they cried ; a new
Venus ! — But one, who loved her, knew
That she was Woman.

He wrought her all of marble pure.
He cried : Thy beauty shall endure
When Hellas sleeps in clay.
Behold, O World, thy Womanhood ! —
They smote the statue where she stood,
And hewed the arms away.

They buried her both dark and deep ;
They bade their wives and sisters heap
Mould on her, with their hands : —
She rose like light ! The centuries
Slipped like a garment to her knees,
And still she stands !

THE FIGURE

Sibyl hoar, Enchantress holy,
Giantess of Melancholy,
Tell us —

CHORUS OF CHERUBIM

Hush !

THE SISTINE EVE

THE FIGURE

What awful book
(As when some rugged hill
Cleaves with a titan's look)
Opens beneath thy gaze,
Where thy vast, pagan face
Is darkened under
Night-hues of unreverberating thunder?

CHORUS OF CHERUBIM

Still! O still!
She is not such
As tone of mortal song can touch.

THE FIGURE

Speak, Prophetess!
We fear — we guess —
What our hearts wait in breathlessness.

THE CUMÆAN SIBYL

"Tarquin! Tarquin!" — Thousand score
They hailed him god and emperor.
I entered at his palace door:
I looked at him —

CHORUS OF CHERUBIM

No more! No more!

THE CUMÆAN SIBYL

I said: I bring thee volumes nine.
Men name thee lordly and divine:
Thou *shalt* be — but the price is mine!
He said: I take no price of thine.

I hurled six volumes in the flame.
He cried: What price now dost thou name.
O Prophetess? — I said: The same!
He frowned; I went the way I came.

He sent for me at set of sun:
And hast thou burned them all but one?
And hast no other price? — Nay, none.
He answered: Then thy will be done!

THE FIGURE

Speak, Sibyl, speak! What was the price
Which asked so proud a sacrifice?

JUDITH

[*Aside to her maid, who bears the head of Holo-
fernes on a golden salver*]

Hark what she saith!

THE CUMÆAN SIBYL

The same which yonder, of Eve's eyes,
The Serpent asks, in Paradise.

JUDITH

I guessed it: — death.

GOLIATH [*to David*]

Death !

* * * * *

FIRST CHERUB

Hark yonder, where from wall to wall, two
Prophets

Converse like oaks in storm across a grove,
One husht in the roar, one vocal in the lull.

SECOND CHERUB

Which one is silent?

FIRST CHERUB

He who, browed benign,
Sits like the Prince of Death, soliloquizing
With the commanding genius of his soul.

SECOND CHERUB

But the other one: What beetling thoughts are
his
Where, like a crag o'erclung by cataracts,
He murmurs deep in the tortuous folds of his
beard?

FIRST CHERUB

Listen !

JEREMIAH

I have likened the Daughter of Zion to a comely
and delicate woman :

The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto
her round about.

They shall pitch their tents against her ; they shall
feed every one in his place. —

*Yea, Eve, men are thy shepherds, and thou like
the Daughter of Zion.*

Prepare ye war against her ! Arise ! let us go up
at noon.

Woe unto us ! for the day goeth away, and the
shadows of evening

Are stretchèd out and afar. Arise ! let us go up
by night,

And let us destroy her palaces. Let us smite the
city that fed us ! —

*Yea, Eve, men are thy shepherds, and thou like
the Daughter of Zion.*

ISAIAH

Yet shall they not destroy her ! But their land
shall be named Ignorance.

It shall be no more inhabited, but wild beasts of
the desert shall lie there.

Yea, satyrs shall dance on their hearths, and
dragons crouch in their palaces.
*For the city is stablished, O Eve, where thy
dreaming shall have its fruition.*

Where shall the Ignorant dwell? Yea, where is
the land of their Eden?
The grass thereof shall wither; their heavens be
closed as a scroll;
And all their host shall fall down, as the leaf fall-
eth off from the vine.
*But the city is stablished in Man, where thy
dreaming, O Eve, hath fruition.*

CHORUS OF CHERUBIM

The Tree! The smiling, bitter Tree!
The Tree, in all its pride and mystery!

ADAM [*beneath the Tree*]

Where dost thou look, beloved, O my Bride?
Where dost thou gaze beyond and far away?
Dost thou not feel thy lover at thy side,
And the soft winds of this cerulean day?
Why look'st thou so, beloved, O my Bride?

THE SNAKE

Lift up thine eyes to mine, daughter of God!
Like birds into heaven let them enter in: —

Behold an angel battling with a cloud;
The angel is Man; the splendid cloud is Sin;
The battle is Man's Soul, daughter of God.

ADAM

Let us go forth into our garden, love:
The birds are singing and the beasts awaken.
Dew-laden dreams fall round us from above,
Like almond-bloom, when breezy boughs are
shaken.
Let us go forth into our garden, love!

THE SNAKE

Eat of the fruit of Knowledge, Child of Eden!
Of bitter Knowledge, which hath roots in
death.
Dare with thy dreams — yea, that which is for-
bidden!
For life is but a dream which conquereth
Its coil of slumber. Live, then, Child of Eden!

ADAM

Love, there shall be no thought but Thee and Me
Forevermore. When our two spirits mate,
Time and the world shall do us ministry
And all the stars contribute to our state.
Love, there shall be no joy but Thee and Me.

THE SNAKE

Behold the stars — and Thee and Me forgotten !
 Time and the world and other lovers, trembling
 At all the beauty still to be begotten ;
 Yea, hark to thine and Adam's sons assembling
 To hymn thy deed, when Eden lies forgotten.

* * * * *

CHORUS OF MALE PRESENCES

We thirst for life, and the more we thirst
 The swifter the rivers of love outpour
 To quench us ;
 Like the living, leaping waters that burst
 From the Prophet's stroke on the desert's shore,
 They uprise and drench us,
 Yet we thirst the more
 And we joy to thirst,
 For we count the pain a joy to repay us,
 When the power of love, which pants to allay us,
 Quickens again
 And again, as at first,
 The infinite rapture the weak call pain.

And we know — for we have sharpened the dull edge
 Of sense on the sword of the Tree of Knowledge,

And we feel — as Spring feels the sky in the
sod —

That we are the sons of a son of God.
And we kindle from that a divine volition —
The fire of more than a mortal ambition,
The love of a conflict deep and grand
Which only Manhood can understand, —
And we bless the Apple, that erst was accurst,
And our Mother Eve, who bestowed the thirst,
Which vaults, like flame, through spirit and brain,
And courses like vigor through every vein,
In seeking the joys that the weak call pain.

CHORUS OF BOTTICELLI'S WOMEN

We thirst for love, and the more we thirst
The deeper our spirits and limbs are immerst
In the beauty, that is love's radiance:
Out at our eyes, o'er the tremulous brim
Of our hearts, it beams, as at heaven's rim
The moon brightens over a lake in a trance;
Till a peace, more lovely than morning light,
Makes us grow like lilies, tall and bright,
From the banks of Sin, which is Ignorance.

And we take an innocent, shy delight
In the flow of our maiden forms, and the sight
Of our faces, half glimpsed, half recondite,

And the luminous coils of our looping dresses,
Which emulate the beauty of tresses,
And the flower-like grace of our hands; but
these
Are the symbols of inner serenities.

For we know [from that piercing intuition
Which takes from Eve its superb ignition]
And we feel — by the light in each other's eyes —
That we are the daughters of Paradise.
And this sense brings with it a certitude
Of the immortal aim of this mortal feud,
And makes us simply reconciled
With weakness of woman and birth of child,
And makes our souls, in largess, be
Self-renderers to futurity,
With a faith, miscalled fatuity
By those who love beauty less than we,
And a passive joy in the present's good,
And a self-forgetting, understood
By the heart alone of womanhood.
And therefore we bless the divinely human
Heart of Eve, that created us Woman,
And gave us that insight, which can prove
Its faith, that ours — while the planets move —
Are the worship and strength of the men we
love.

CHORUS OF SHAPES IN "THE LAST JUDGMENT"

We are the Phantoms, which the exceeding madness

Of mortal Ignorance creates in sadness

Out of the clouds of conflict and of pain.

Horror and Hopelessness, amid the gnarring

And knotted tumult of our rabid warring,

Spawn us, and their own Dark devours us
again.

Hateful to others, to ourselves abhorrent,

We fume and wrestle, like a falling torrent

That, fearing, hastens its own overthrow;

Or bleakly blown upon by winds eternal,

Like shadowy spirits strewn on shores infernal,

Downcast, we file in diuturnity of woe.

Far from the lamps of Dawn and pure Orion,

We endure the anarch tortures of Ixion —

Immortal anguish: misery! O pain!

Love, send thy light amid our dim abortions,

To show that we are evanescent portions

Of the Mind's mortal battling for the eternal
gain.

JONAS

Awful and dazzling Loveliness !

Immortal Render of our mystery !

O World ! O orbèd Time !

O Heaven ! And does my spirit climb
Beyond them all, beyond them all — to thee,
Lady ineffable of Love ? — This, this
It is to love, to dare and to achieve !

Behold, O Eve,
The consummation of thy bitter Tree.
Look, mighty Mother ! Even thou didst conceive

This son ! — Thine insurrection leaps in me,
An effervescing fire, a piercing foison
Of keen effulgence ! Vision in mine eyes
Like clouded wine it pours, and in my limbs

Impenetrating joy, subtler than poison,
And in mine ears — incomparable hymns !

Yea, like a Charioteer, on whirling Time,

I sit sublime,

And guide, with my majestic left hand,
The invisible reins of nameless black Despairs
And haughty Miseries — a chafing band
That plunge and tremble, like enraged Night-
mares,
In the dusk of the Last Judgment; these, like
steeds,

Propel the triumph of my viewless car,
And while the purple incense streams from under
The trampling fleetness of their muffled thunder,
And while their flanks froth terrors, in bright
beads,

To dare the goal
Of my imperious soul, —
Still guiding them, as with a god's control,
Over my splendid shoulder turning
Mine eyes, in giant yearning,
Upward, my Mother, upward still to thee
I gaze for power and love and immortality.

* * * * *

THE SNAKE [*to Eve*]

Now canst thou doubt the beauty of thy dream-
ing?

Now canst thou doubt the duty of thy deed?
Eat of the fruit, O Eve! Thou art redeeming
The race of Adam to their latest seed,
For Time shall prove the beauty of thy dream-
ing.

EVE [*taking the Apple from the Snake*]

O ye Wise, love Beauty! All
Ye Strong, revere Her!

SECOND INTERLUDE

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Ha ! dost thou shake thy slumber off, young
titan ?

(Unconscious child no more, for now the dawn
Proclaims the awaking world.) Ah ! dost thou
seize

The shadow of my mantle, and in mine eyes
Gaze with an ecstasy of pain and power ?
Say, dost thou feel the immitigable blade,
Which sings in the light above the Tree of Knowl-
edge,

Upscorch the loveless impotence within thee,
Ignite thy mind, and scorify thy heart ?
What ! dost thou reach thy hand thyself to swing
it ?

Arise ! Go forth ! Youth of the centuries,
And wield thy sword in prayer to thy great
Mother !

THIRD CANTO: THE BIRTH OF MAN

CHORUS OF PRESENCES

Eden is fallen !

Man is arisen !

Like a knighted warrior, behold him arise.

Like a waker from slumber,

Like a captive from prison,

He bursts from the bondage of Paradise !

For the Almighty's stroke

Has severed the yoke

Of the beast's contentment and earthward eyes.

SONG OF THE EXPELLING ANGEL

Mine is the stroke Promethean !

The infinite love that burns like ire,

The impregnating might, the conceiving fire,

And the pang that delivers the Birth of Man.

I am the life, whose garment is Death,

And Truth like a lining within is laid,

And him who seeks me I singe with my
blade,

But he weareth the garment and triumpheth.

Adam, depart ! My sword's flame, like a torch's,
Reveals thy kingdom consumed and
wrecked,
But the pain that revolts in thine intellect
Is the love that heals in the lightning that
scorches.

CHORUS OF PRESENCES

Eden is fallen !
Man is arisen !
He is burst from the prison
Of Paradise !

ADAM

Eve, crouch more close to me. I will protect thee.
The hailing fire my sense like anguish sears.
The goal is far — but O ! how glorious,
For through the night thine eyes are still the stars.

PART TWO

POEMS LYRICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE

GROUP I

Two song-birds build their nests within my
brain,
And hatch strange broods, each to his own re-
frain;
Ever one sings: "To-morrow,
Sweet Joy!" The other: "Yesterday, sweet sor-
row!"

FRAIL Sleep, that blowest by fresh banks
Of quiet, crystal pools, beside whose brink
The varicolored dreams, like cattle, come to
drink,

Cool Sleep, thy reeds, in solemn ranks,
That murmur peace to me by midnight's
streams,
At dawn I pluck, and dayward pipe my flock
of dreams.

THE ARC LIGHT

I WATCHED an arc light under wind-stirr'd trees
Sleep on the pale green grass, in tender
swoon,
And held my breath thinking the pensive
moon

Was telling there her lucent rosaries.
Light of the Arts ! no more by lonely seas
Wandering in naked glory art thou met ;
From out our heaven Homer's moon has set,
That lit the love-bowers of the Dryades.

Yet 'neath the conscious vestments Time has
wrought,
The simple Graces love and act the same ;
And through the subtle wires of labored thought
The world is lit by heaven's divinest flame,
Till, in the sordid midnight of the poor,
The lamp of Zeus illumines a workman's door.

SHE stood before a florist's window-pane.

Roses peered forth and they were envious
pale,

And lilies, white as cloistered virgin's veil,
Vied with the deep carnations but in vain.

If at her beauty's heart a lethal stain

Were hid, to beauty's face it told no tale.

"Cut flowers [so she read the sign] for
sale;"

Half to herself she murmured it again.

One stopped within the sharp, electric light,

And threw his shadow on her and his eyes,

Nor read those sad concealed analogies

Of which her gorgeous, answering look
was full.

"Cut flowers," and to-morrow they shall blight,

But till to-morrow, God ! how beautiful.

I DREAMED a thousand ages, armed with flint
And bone and bronze, were toiling in a mint,
And sculptured rude to see
On each rough coin they struck was "Poesie."

And now, in that same hall, a mighty wheel,
Revolved incessant by a mob in steel,
Showers the round gold thence
Stamped with the goddess's head "Convenience."

LEISURE, kind Leisure, I require !
 Leisure, whose snood
 Of quiethood
Conceals shy dreams of sage desire :
 For Leisure, only Leisure,
Ripens young thought and brings work pleasure.

Dull toil is but a drudge at best ;
 Sloth has no profit,
 Sleep — still less of it ;
But idle brains are busiest
 While Leisure, shyest Leisure,
Ripens young thought and brings work pleasure.

HER eyes are casements clear as dew
For her kindness to look through;
There, behind their crystal, stray
Fairy fancies dressed in gray;
Through the trellis'd lashes, till
Slumber draws the silken blind,
Her quick spirit peeps behind
The pane, or signals from the sill.

IN VENICE

THE Lady of the Sunset,
The Bride of the New Moon,
She lifts her liquid garments
About her silvery shoon,
And as she sways their draperies
The dim stars interwoven
In their dark fabric swing and ripple
Like winds by music cloven.

The Princess of the Olden Isles,
The Enamored of the Sea,
She has glided from her throne of stars
And courtesied, Love, to thee:
Along her smooth and turquoise halls
She glides, and kneels with me
Before thy shrine, with claspèd hands,
And bows and prays to thee!

A MATINADE

RISE, sweet signora of the sigh !
The gondola is gliding by.
The queenly Adriatic Sea
Shall hold her mirror, dear, for thee,
Apollo be thy slave, to twine
A fillet for those locks of thine,
And lure the moonlight from thine eyes
To cool the day-star of his skies.
So lady dear, be fleet !

And from your dreamy sighs,
Signora mine, signora sweet,
Arise !

TO A GONDOLA

SWAN of the silver beak and sable breast,
 Stemming the night,
Art thou a bird of song, or bark of quest,
 Or heaven-wandered sprite,
 That in the still moonlight
Makest in palace courts thy liquid nest?

If bird thou be, what swaying skies are these,
 Between two heavens,
That lap thee in their starry lucencies,
 Whilst thou toward unseen havens,
 With plumage like the raven's
Glidest with pinions closed against the breeze?

If bark thou be, what fairy argosies
 Leadest thou on?
What amber port of all the sunset's seas
 Lures thee with music yon?
 What fêtes of Oberon,
Tinkling husht joys, twinkling tranquillities?

A sprite thou art — a spirit without peer !

A lover's thought

Thou art, and Fancy is thy gondolier,

Whose gliding vision, fraught

With song and love, gleams but

An instant in life's dark, only to disappear.

“IN THE STILL CAMPAGNA.”

IN the still campagna,
When no birds were singing,
'Mid the undulating
Little hills and hollows
Pied with starred mosaic,
There I stopped and pondered.

Right against the azure
Of the Alban mountains,
Rose an overwhelming
Gaunt and eyeless ruin :
Eyeless, but the sockets
Stared on me in sadness.

Loneliness then clutched me
Like a chill at noonday ;
Terrors of old Cæsars
Taught me a new heartache
Where those walls still on me
Stared with a stark blindness.

“How ! old earthy phantom,
Hast thou, then, no solace

When the burning sunbeam
Chars thy skull like Cyclops' ?
None ? No inner vision,
Thoughts that hymn like Homer's ?"

Hardly had I ceased when
Sudden from the knollside,
Or perhaps from heaven,
Through that hollow, lidless
Ruin flying, rose a
Flock of songbirds, singing.

Love, you are my nature !
When by lonely broodings
Long on mortal anguish
I stand blinded, swift and
Sweet from lyric fountains,
Dart then through my sadness
Songbirds of your soul !

EARLY MAY IN NEW ENGLAND

STRAWBERRY-FLOWER and violet
Are come, but the wind blows coldly yet;
And robin's-egg skies brood sunny chill
Where hyacinth summer sleeps under the hill
And the frog is still.

Applebloom floats on the warm blue river,
But white shad-blossoms ripple and shiver,
And purple-grackle pipes till his blithe heart
grieves,
For his gladdest songs, through the little elm-
leaves,
Are but make-believes.

EARLY APRIL IN ENGLAND

ACROSS the moist beam of the cloud-rimmed sun,
The larks run up in ecstasies of Spring,
And little feathered flutes of melody,
The yellow-ammers, pipe along the hedges.

The sheep, half basking in the golden blaze,
Half shivering in the gray, engulfing shadows,
Browse on the faint-green hills; the chilly wind
Ruffles the white geese on the rippled pond.

SONG

SPRING is Shakspeare's garden ! —
In May, to the lover's mind,
Every rose is a Rosalind
And every wood an Arden.
Hark ! "Phœbe ! Phœbe ! Phœbe !"
Sylvius ! Can it he be ?

HOLIDAY

WHAT is so free
As a child in its glee,
Or a bird on the tree!
A jumping boy
Is a wave of joy;
Little girls,
That gayly pass
With flying curls
Across the grass,
The soul unclog:
And oh a sight
Of rare delight
Is a running shepherd dog!

THE KATYDID

THOU husky raven of the insect race,
 Who hintest — hid by darkness from espial —
Of some poor maid's disgrace,
 Cease this asseveration and denial!
Whatever the black blame, will it abate it
Thus to incessant rasp and iterate it?
If Katy *did* the dark deed, let *her* state it.

THE CRICKET

HARK to the fairy linnet —

How reticent he sings !

Sings, stops; then, in a minute,

He'll re-begin it,

Then stop again.

The sunset is his dawn :

When day is over,

He pipes a delicate strain

Beneath the tiger-lilies, by the lawn,

Or, from the top boughs of the tallest clover,

Outpours his Lilliputian carollings.

At night, I prayed for sleep; instead
The Muse came, rummaging my head
For rhymes. Again I craved the dews
Of sleep; they fell — upon the Muse.

WITH A ROSE

TO S. A. D.

A ROSE —

From lovely Rhodope's remotest time —
The poets chose
To instil a lovelier meaning in their rhyme.

A friend
Is subtler than a poet. Friendship knows
A way to lend
A finer fragrance even to the rose.

STANZAS

TO THE BURNISHED GRAIN OF AN OLD-FASHIONED MAHOGANY TABLE

AURORAL tempest on an auburn sea,
 Scourged by the spectres of unmoving wind,
Still storm, dumb gale, immured immensity,
 Dark thunderer upon the shores of mind,
 Spirit of oceans! — here thou art confined
In beauty and in silence. Rive thy locks
 Tumultuous, till thy bronze waves foam in
 glory,
 Writhe on till thou art hoary,
The hush-air'd chamber shall not feel thy shocks,
Nor thy smooth polished shore thereby be under-
mined.

Wild harrier of the mad atmospheres,
 Whose looks are lightnings, who hath cap-
 tured thee
And poured in wood this sunny wrath of tears?
 Who else but mirror-cinctured Nature, she
 That lurks by rivers and the placid sea

To prison-in the silent-roaring thunders
 With pomp pictorial. In such still state
 Art thou incarcerate,
And Time, whose sitting worketh mellow wonders,
Thy jailer sits, in cell of dark mahogany.

The terrors of the guessed invisible
 Are worse than seen calamities; the eye
Beholds not here the famine-screeching gull,
 The ear knows not the night-wreck'd sea-
 man's cry,
Yet may the fancy hear his monody
Sung by the mermaids of those amber deeps,
 Beneath whose burnished and congealèd
 waves
 A lurid dragon raves,
Whose dropping eye with ruddy tinctures steeps
That marvel-teeming world in strange mortality.

Tempestuous sea, dash on ! Roar on, dim tides,
 That come, or go, or stay, — we are not
 stirred;
The dark-descending simoon o'er thee glides,
 But to the wooden'd sense it moans are surd.
Even while we gaze, our inward eyes — grown
 blurr'd, —

Behold thee for illusion, that reproves

Our reason's folly, till we ask: why should

We sympathize with wood?

Yea, thou art like a passionate heart that loves:

Wildly it beats upon the world, but is not heard.

SUNSET

BEHOLD where Night clutches the cup of heaven
And quaffs the beauty of the world away !
Lo, his first draught is all of dazzling day;
The next he fills with the red wine of even
And drinks; then of the twilight's amber, seven
Deep liquid hues, seven times, superb in ray,
He fills—and drinks; the last, a mead pale-
gray
Leaves the black beaker gemmed with starry
levin.

Even so does Time quaff our mortality !
First, of the effervescing blood and blush
Of virgin years, then of maturity
The deeper glow, then of the pallid hush
Where only the eyes still glitter, till even they —
After a pause — melt in immenser day.

FOR F. J. L.

THE flower shall fade, not the spirit
Which gave to it being;
That has finer forms to inherit
Beyond our mere seeing.

Oh, why does the lily seem fair?
For seeing? for smelling?
Or is it that Ariel there
Has found him a dwelling?

Stale flowers for me shall not sere,
If you do but give them;
Slight thoughts for me shall be dear,
If you but conceive them.

TO M. AND M. L.

I CANNOT think good-by;
How can I say it?
My heart's debt lies too nigh
For words to pay it.

Bright cloud, that flingest wide
The heaven's wonder,
Dark cloud, and dim hillside,
And far-voiced thunder,

Soft breeze, that ringest clear
The sweet day's knell,
Sad bird, that singest near, —
Speak my farewell!

BALLAD

I

YOUNG rider and steed they dash on through the
dusk,
And the fog gathers gray as the mould on the
husk,
And the froth on the flank is like foam on the flood
Where the brown stream pours panting through
dark underwood.

“But what of the night, love, and what of the
miles,
When the morning shall break in my true love’s
own smiles?
Oh, I’d ride the white charger that neighs from the
sea
To the edge of the world, if she waited for me!”

Dim head in the doorway it hears him dash by,
And the cold smile curls keen, and the laugh
lights the eye:

“Ye’ll hae off wi’ your league-boots and love by
the sea
When your bonny hair’s white and ye’re wiser
like me.”

II

The flare’s in the chimney, the song’s on the
crane,
And the maiden sits watching the fog on the
pane,
And the hot glowing hearthlight is cosey and dry,
But the warm light that’s tender’s the light in her
eye.

“Nay, granny, I’ll just take a step from the sill,
For the twilight is cold, and the mist hides the
hill,
And fain would I warm the whole world with my
heart
To comfort thee — O my dear love — where thou
art !”

“Ye’ve let the winds in, lass ; the candle is out !
Now God send ye wisdom, whate’er ye’re about !
The parritch is cold, lass, that erst was sae hot :
When ye’re older ye’ll be a deal wiser, I wot !”

III

There's a leap in the mist; there's a voice in the
night;

There's a step that is heavy with one that is light:

"Ah, *love*, dear, is wisdom, and wisdom is this:

The seals of your sages—they melt with a kiss!"

EVEN as an infant fingers the crisp sheet
And crumples it, the more his milk is sweet,
So we, with restive hands, in happy sleep
Enact vague deeds on Nature's cover-slip.

A CHILD

BRIEF Revelation of enduring Truth,
 Frail snowflake in the silent storm of God,
Scarce lighting on the swallow-wing of youth
 Ere wafting down to dew the pregnant sod,

Infant! or Angel else — thine innocence
 Is as a crystal, wherethrough men may see
The seedling's might, the star's magnificence,
 And of our common day the mystery.

More, it enkindles might; and like the pure
 Polished convex of a bright burning-glass,
Binds the wild hues and lightnings, which endure
 In love as heaven, and in concentric mass

Ignites by them the unfeeling dross of nature
To conflagrations heavenly in stature.

BABY PANTOMIME

SERENE, he sits on other shores

Than ours: with wide, unconscious lands
He holds strange speech, or, silent, pores

On denizens of viewless strands;
On tablets of the air weird scores

He writes, and makes, with eager hands,
As strange erasements; then, two-fisted, stores
An elfin hour-glass with heavenly sands.

THE FIRST TOOTH

DEAR babe, that this should be ! Whence should
this come ? —

This horny 'scutcheon of an eld orang,
Where through the tender coral of thy gum
The wee, sly beast has peeped his prying
fang:

Colossal meditation ! Can this be
The cropping of that seed which Cadmus
sowed ?
Or that gaunt emblem of mortality
Under the sickle, on our earth-abode ?

Forbid it, heaven ! 'Tis but the nursling thorn
That nestles near the bloom of every rose,
The curling holly-leaf's keen-sharded horn,
The stubborn shield of beauty's frail repose,

The official mace of angels : even as the Lord
Guarded the grace of Eden with a sword !

THE DESERTED STEEDS

MIDWAY the silent parlor plain

The iron horses stand, nor turn,

But like the yoke that Putnam left,

Await, mid-field, their lord's return.

There they have stood since yestereve —

Nor champed, nor broke their traces — till

The moon looked in the western blind,

Till morn peeped o'er the eastern sill.

Then strides their lord to field again

To crack his whip and drive his teams,

Back from the far campaigns of sleep,

The baby Bunker Hill of dreams.

THE CHILD AND SLEEP

THIS baby brow, like a smooth handkerchief,
Has in the night been ironed white and even,
And all these little limbs, beyond belief,
Are like sweet garments, fresh prepared in
heaven

To clothe the littlest angel loved by Mary.
Who was it smoothed these rose-habiliments
Of childhood? — Sleep, a gentle nurse, and fairy,
Who folds the crumplings of our discontents,

And lines Day's chest with viewless lavender
To sweeten all the vestments of our care.
All Nature's tired children turn to her
For renovation; for she can repair
The outworn body, from her secret scrip,
And minds outworn seek her physicianship.

SUMMER SONG

THE cricket is chirring,
The tree-toad is purring,
 The busy frog pipes,
The beetle is whirring,
 And curled in his nest,
 'Mid the night dew of rest,
My wee one is stirring.

*Then quick, Fairy Hummer,
Lull my newcomer
 Rosy and deep
 In sleep, soft sleep,
'Mid the sweets of the summer.*

The stars at bo-peeping
Like white lambs are leaping
 On the hills of the dark
In the Good Shepherd's keeping:
 Their wool is like silk,
 And they pour their bright milk
For my little one's sleeping.

*Then hush, Fairy Hummer !
Kiss my newcomer,
And cradle him deep
In sleep, soft sleep,
'Mid the sweets of the summer.*

FIRE WORSHIP

A POPPY, all on fire with beauty's beams,
 Outburned the glamour of the liquid bar
 Of sunlight where it swam, diffusing far
The brilliance of its spiritual streams:
A chalice, spilled on some blood-stained trireme's
 Prow, in libation to the sanguine star,
 The ritual cup of dread Dyauspitar,
Brimmed with the wine of its own opiate dreams.

Before that shrine, in mute idolatry, —
 A little Gangean god, an orient
 Cupid, rose-flushed with infant wonder-
 ment —
The baby gazed, and reached in rhapsody
His small, translucent hands, while silently
 From flower to face a rubiate nimbus went.

PLASTIC Fancies, form a mould:

Fill it, Heart, with burning gold:

Break it, Love, when life is cold.

When the shard is struck away,

There shall stand — where once was clay —

Beauty, till the Judgment-day!

THE UNSAID

THE forms sublime, the moods elate,
That rise within the poet's reach,
May never transubstantiate
Their glowing ardors into speech.

Yet sweet — although we fail in words —
To feel the changed, creative light
That gleams on nature's fields and herds,
Cast by a sun of inner sight,

While burst upon the exultant brain
Visions of grandeur and of grace.
He gazes more serene on men
Who looks the Muses in the face.

I WATCHED a drama, sitting in the wings,
And heard the plaudits of eternal things:
But when the Prompter bawled
My name, I failed my cue — nor was recalled.

ALL joys, familiar and divine,
All satisfactions fail, save thine,
 Contemplation !
Ambitions climb and fall ;
Love, and Hope, his thrall,
Pity, and our noblest passions pall ;
 Yea, one and all,
 Each one.

Not Venus, wreathed with bloom and vine,
Glows with rapture like to thine —
 Meditation !
The rose can never be
Sweet as our revery
About her. Lord, each deity
 Bows down to thee,
 Each one.

WHEN subtle passion makes me slave
And leads me, in her golden chain,
Where dazzling legions of the grave
Troop in her spurious beauty's train,
Poetry, make then thy sign —
Lord and Sovereign divine !

The beast wears still his tusk and snout ;
Man merely has dispensed with these.
The satyr leeringly looks out
Behind the mask of Socrates ;
Thou only art of heavenly line,
Lord and Sovereign divine !

When, therefore, orient-vestured Sin
Holds her usurping court in me,
Set thy white torch aflame within
Her palace walls, O Poetry,
And on their ashes build thy shrine,
Lord and Sovereign divine !

THE SLINGER

I

A BOY, who stoops upon a green hillside,
Where he has climbed, exhilarant and flushed,
And picks up a flat stone, shell-shaped and
smooth —

A piece of splitty slate, or curved feldspar —
Scanned with the relish of an expert eye,
And fits it in the hollow of his hand,
And sways his body for the joyous fling —
How wondrously he shoots it through the air!
How pent with song it soars into the blue
Stored with the frenzy of his boyish whim,
Skims the sunk summit of the tallest pine,
Rounds, dips, tacks, turns, then, twirling, soars
again,

Catching the sunlight like a swallow's wing;
Then, like the last dip of a 'cellist's bow,
Or a ground-sparrow, slacking to its nest,
Slants the long slope, and dives in to the vale.

Not more inspired the pebble David slung!
A stone, a lump, a clot of hardened loam,
Yet, in an instant's metamorphosis,
It leaps to beauty like a work of God —
A lyric thing, a fellow of the lark,
Breathing a moment's immortality —
Then sinks to silence and the loam it left.

II

Whose was the hand which flung me into breath?
Whose was the whim or purpose of that deed? —
Flung in the dizzy zenith of clear mind,
Whirled in the cloudy vortex of dark will,
On, on — projectile of a deathless youth,
Poised with his sling upon the brow of heaven —
Skimming, and skimmed by other whizzing clay,
Skipped in the sun to caper caracoles,
What is of man the ultimate Goliath,
Giant of Ill, whom he must batter down
That Saul the Right may reign? What is man's
goal?
Or — mindful of the grim analogy —
What stricken pine, forgotten in the forest
That skirts the valley underneath Time's hill,
Shall mark his accidental tumbling-tomb?

LIFE SAID TO DEATH

LIFE said to Death: 'Brother,
Who was our mother?
Did not One who bore us
Make the world for us:
Were we not twin-born?
What hast thou, then, inborn
Lordlier, vaster,
That thou playest master?
By what right or merit
Dost thou inherit
Earth's beautiful riches?

Answer me: Which is
The world's more deserving —
The served, or the serving?
Thou art a depender
On me, yet a spender
Of all my dear earnings,
Rhapsodies, yearnings.

I build, thou breakest;
I bring, and thou takest;
I save, thou lavishest;
I love, and thou ravishest.

Deaf and disdainful,
Thou leavest me baneful —
Curst all I care for.
Answer me: Wherefore?

O, say that thy spendings
Are used in befriendings;
That 'neath barbarity
Thou workest in charity,
To joy givest feeling,
And a quick healing
To pain's slow cancer.
O, loosen the tied knot
Of silence, and answer! —'

But Death replied not.

OLD Age, the irrigator,
Digs our bosoms straighter,
More workable and deeper still
To turn the ever-running mill
Of nights and days. He makes a trough
To drain our passions off,
That used so beautiful to lie
Variegated to the sky,
On waste moorlands of the heart —
Haunts of idleness, and art
Still half-dreaming. All their piedness,
Rank and wild and shallow wideness,
Desultory splendors, he
Straightens conscientiously
To a practicable sluice
Meant for workaday, plain use.
All the mists of early dawn,
Twilit marshes, being gone
With their glamour, and their stench,
There is left — a narrow trench.

As children fling bright silver in the sea
To watch it shine and sink there, so do we
Our treasures of wrought rhyme
And marble toss amid the surge of time.

GROUP II

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

OUT of the 'obscure wood' and ominous way
Which are our life, to that obscurer sea
Whose margin glooms and gleams alternately

With storm and splendor of the shrouded spray —
He has departed. Our familiar day,

His elm-hushed, ivied walks, no more shall
see

That radiant smile of austere courtesy:

On Shady Hill the mist hangs cold and gray.

He has departed hence, but not alone:

Still in his steps, where golden discourse
burns,

To Virgil now he speaks, and now he turns

Toward Allighieri in calm undertone,

Holding with modest tact his path between

The Mantuan and the mighty Florentine.

FRANCIS JAMES CHILD

How fain we conjure back his face ! How fain
As, bowed with musings long on elvish lore,
He clutched his satchel at the class-room
door
And shot the quick "Good-morning, gentlemen,"
From under the bronze curls, and entered. Then
For us that hour of quaint illusion wore
Such spell as when, beside the Breton shore,
The wizard clerk astounded Dorigen.

For we beheld the nine-and-twenty ride
Through those dim aisles their deathless pil-
grimage,
Lady and monk and rascal laugh and chide,
Living and loving on the enchanted page,
Whilst, half apart, there murmured side by side
The master-poet and the scholar-mage.

TO GEORGE PIERCE BAKER

THE ghosts of Praise-God Barebones and his
clan

Still walk, and with their old acerbity

Infect us; even the University

Is haunted still, and the sparse Puritan,

Turned Prospero, has made a Caliban

Of human passion, and wild Poesie

Pinched in an oak to starve, and Mimicry

And all her kindred Muses put to ban.

Yet not so now at Harvard; there betakes

Him now the scholar-player, with his Muse

(That deathless wench, the Mermaid) and
renews

His vows, and breaks his fast, and is
restored

By our own Baker. — May the loaves he bakes

Soon pile a feast at Master Shakspeare's
board!

TO WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY

MOODY, our time is glad of you; 'tis given
(After exotic, ineffectual blows)

For you, a poet, with sure blade of prose
Keen from the artist's scabbard, to have riven
Our specious theatre from its roof-beam even
Unto the pit of smugness, to disclose
The emancipated desert's wild repose —
The new-world gladness of our native heaven.

Henceforth we cannot be the same; for us
Americans, because of you, the tide
Dramatic turns to seek its heritage
Splendidly homeward to ourselves; our
stage
Is cleft: between its pusillanimous
And daring goals stands now the Great Divide.

TO THE SAME, AFTER SEVERE ILL-
NESS

Now that you are come up from the hush vale
Whose crumbling verge hugs close the dread-
named stream,
And we, for whom your sojourn there did
seem

A time intolerable, may inhale
Glad breath to greet you on the old firm trail
Of health again, still that suspense extreme
Pervades our deep thanksgiving, like a dream
Of Him whose thin hand felt the sanguine nail.

For not alone the sentient personal
Pang that was spared compels our gratitude,
But that contagious loss which would
have spread,
Unknown, to those who knew you not, through
all
The after-time; but now, that dread sub-
dued,
With victory life girds you, garlanded.

TO GEORGE GREY BARNARD

HEWER of visions from our human clay,
Hewer of man's strong soul in sentient stone,
Of maiden limbs, like breath of flowers new-
blown,
Of mighty loins, girded in giant fray,
Of hearts that wrestle, vanquish, fall and pray —
Hail to you, dauntless Hewer! Not alone
Your arm is raised to shape the vast un-
known:
A nation's sinews hold that arm in sway.

Though from Carraran hills, by alien hands,
Those forms of plastic vision are unfurled,
Yet in their glowing, marble chastities
America in naked splendor stands
Inviolatè, and looms across the world —
Labor's impassioned apotheosis.

TO AUGUSTUS FRANZÉN¹

HAD poet Geoffrey been a painter then
In Richard's days, he would have painted
true,
Healthful and bold and beautiful, like you
Franzén, large-souled, sure-handed. Had Franzén,
Painter in oils, wielded an English pen
To-day as artist, he would limn anew
Even such a clear-eyed Canterbury view
As Chaucer limned of nature and of men.

So, when I watch, anew, my little son
Take breath beneath your brush, and pout
again
His arch and fresh-eyed innocence, I
stand
Silent, and take your hand in mine, as one
Who, in Old London, or Velasquez' Spain,
Held in his own a living master's hand.

¹ With a copy of "The Canterbury Pilgrims."

TO J. E. F.

Is this our common world of weariness —
 The narrow stream we fume and struggle in?
 Soft as a sleeping ocean and serene
The quivering city slumbers, measureless
Under the moon: the roaring paths men press
 By day, are sweet with silences, akin
 To dying murmurs of a violin:
Such magic has the moon to calm and bless.

The mind, too, has its moonlight, which can
 steep
 Time's sordid commonplace in harmony
 That heals pain with oblivion, and the
 scar
Of garish strife with beauty, and the deep
 Rebellions of the soul with sympathy:
 Such might has quiet friendship's mystic
 star.

THE HILL-SPIRIT

TO R. B.

RIBBED like a conch and ruddy through the dark
The frail wedge of his horn-clear tepee glows
Above the pasture-cliff, warm with the rose
Light of its own live heart: outside the stark
Grove clicks the wampum of its frozen bark
Against the starry cold; a shadow shows
Tall in the tepee's slit; then in the snows
Valeward husht moccasins imprint their mark.

Blithe with the wonder of their home wood-fire
The hillside children, rapt in fairy lore,
Hark suddenly his footstep: giant-
geared,
He stands before them; then upon the floor
Seated beside them, like an immortal sire,
Laughs — with one great hand tangled
in his beard.

TO R. E. F.

ARCH twinklings of the quaint wood-smile of Pan,
Far-trembling, golden lights from Jason's
fleece,
And lyric breathings from the lutes of Greece,
And gentle ardencies from old Japan,
With whatsoever blithe, Arcadian,
And simply wise accord with such as these,
Are blent in you to one true Yankee piece,
Keen, classic, laughter-brewing, Keatsian.

By forum, Alp and oriental fane
(As varied climes color the song-bird's
wings)
On you far paths and fair imaginings
Have traced their retrospects; yet, if
there be
One word by which to conjure you up plain,
That fine home-word is Hospitality.

TO E. H. S.

BRIGHT in the dark of sleep all night till morn
The henchmen dreams about my bed did sit
And looked on me, with their strange torches
lit;

And one was passionate, and one was lorn,
And one, that fingered his bronze beard in scorn,
Scowled at another's smile of tranquil wit;
And all were dreams of heroes yet unwrit
In dramas high, and pageants yet unborn.

O happy knight! immortal retinue!
What may we not, when morning breaks,
achieve!

The morning breaks — ah, pale and strengthless
crew!

Who now shall in your mighty forms believe?
Dear friend and host, even you! My dreams
I leave,
(Those happy dreams) to serve and honor you.

GROUP III

FAIR is the foreground of her soul
 With mirth and domesticity,
And vistas far, through cottage vines,
 Of a storm-lit, pagan sea.

A bluebird nests beneath the porch,
 A hidden song-sparrow, hard-by,
Sings near the ground; but overhead
 A gull's wing glitters high.

Rose-fragrance dreams along the hedge,
 Wild sea-tangs drift from off the wave,
And girlish trebles sweetly pierce
 The eternal ocean-stave.

My love was freshly come from sea
The morning she first greeted me :
The salt mist's tang, the sunny blow
Had tinged her cheeks a ripening glow.

She bowed to me with all the ease
Of meadow-grasses in the breeze,
And yet her look seemed far away
Amid the splendors of the spray.

Her step was vigorous and free
As maiden's in the Odyssey ;
And when she laughed, I heard the tunes
Of rushes in the windy dunes.

An air so limitless, an eye
So virgin in its royalty —
Hers was a spirit and a form
That took my inland heart by storm.

I felt an impulse, an unrest,
And secret tides within my breast
Flowed up, with silent, glad control,
And drew the rivers of my soul.

THE soft rains are falling
 On wild rose and vine;
The far winds are calling
 To foreland and pine;

The big wave is rocking
 The gull on its breast;
The surges are knocking
 With joyous unrest;

There's a spirit in the sky, love,
 That pants for the sea,
But the heart that beats nigh, love,
 Beats higher for thee !

SHE was a child of February,
 Of tree-top gray and smother'd stream,
Of cedar and the marsh rosemary,
 Of snowbird and the sunset's dream.

A frozen brook that, April-eyed,
 Sings soft beneath its silver fretting,
Her lyric spirit soon belied
 The ice of her New England setting;

Till on a day when sudden thaw
 Rent all her snowy chains asunder,
The impassioned sun beheld with awe
 Her heart of deep Italian wonder.

Still Nature has described her best,
 Veiled in those February skies,
With summer singing in her breast,
 And April laughing in her eyes.

I HEARD the waves exulting in their power,
 Their unpaced leagues of dim immensity,
Their splendors and their thunders and their
 dower
 Of heaven's far glory, and I thought: — the
 sea,
 The sea is mighty ! Yet, O Love, to me
Who sought a symbol, meagre was that might
 Which was encliffed and shored, for vaster be
The tides of love ; not beach nor beacon-light
Marks where their surges clasp the misty infinite.

MAID-MARINER

THE ragged clouds are all a-rout,
And the white gulls reel like swallows,
And the billowy herds, at Triton's shout,
Plunge snorting down the hollows,
And my heart is with the storms a-stir
For Marian, my maid-mariner.

The spray is whiffed by the sneezing wind
Where the dory's prow is ducking,
And souging where the cliff is brined
The seaweed-cows are sucking,
And the wild-duck flocks begin to whirl,
Marian, maid-mariner !

Then come with me to the green salt tides
When the storms have slipt their traces,
And the live blood vaults in our glowing sides,
And the winds flap in our faces,
And hearken to my heart's harbinger,
Marian, maid-mariner !

O, if the world were all a bark,
And wishes all were true, love,
With one blithe maiden I'd embark —
Her captain and her crew, love —
And sail the world away with her:
My Marian, maid-mariner !

OUT of the drenched and leafless night, my dear,
 Entering to you—like hot-haste March I feel,
Who bows before the beauty of the year,
 And spurns presumptuous Winter with his
 heel.

MY thoughts are like pied cattle on the hills,
 Browsing the pale green slants, through silt-
 ing mist
That laps the verdant uplands, and far fills
 The valleys where the parted woods have
 kisst.

Scarce can I see them for the purpling rain
 That drives across the pastures, where they
 loom
Beyond the hedges of my shrouded brain,
 Herding the solemn sunset of my gloom.

O Fancy, be my eager-lung'd Boy-Blue,
 And blow upon your dewy echo-horn
A blast to call them home to me and you
 Out of the eerie meads and magic corn;

For they shall yield us white abundance of
Their milk, for me to bring unto my love.

WHEN beauty ripens newly in old sheaves,
 Wears purple 'mid the vine's cold penury,
And hides young blushes in age-altered leaves,
 I take one more excuse to think of thee,

Conceiving this: the harvest's mellow gold
 Shall gleam, though faded harvests feed the
 swine;
The sheaf's bright glance shall shine in brandies
 old,
 The dark grape's splendor glisten in the wine.

So, too, when thou art withered from the earth,
 And loveliness no habitation finds
In thy beloved form, yet shall thy worth
 Still glow with living lustre in men's minds.

O then to be thy vintager I ask,
And every verse of mine thy beauty's flask !

WHEN first the pussy-willow shows
 Her fairy muffs of gray,
While still amid the poplar tree
The blithe, familiar chickadee
His morning suet gratis gets, —
When first the consternating crows
Break on the winter-keen repose
 Of February day
 Their strident cawings,
Startling with Stygian silhouettes
 The virgin snows
 To wake, and with faint thawings,
 Like speech half-audible,
Murmur of spring, until we houslings feel —
 Or dream we feel — the breath
 Of blowing violets,
That start where the old oak-leaf floats to death,
 At such a time —
On this your birthday morning, winter-weary,
 Once more the stealing rhyme
Runs up within my heart, to greet you, dearie.

For now through all of nature that we love
A vernal change, like love's, has late begun;

The northing sun
That nightly from Ascutney shall remove
Farther its setting, fills
The valley-chalice of the Cornish hills
With wine of warmer splendors; by woodways
Those spurting flames of blue, the jays,
Less oft the eye and ear amaze,
Mock musical, with gong-like throat,
Ringing the red-wing'd blackbird's note;
More seldom sounds the frosty axe,
And by the rabbit-run
Our quaint embroideries of snowshoe tracks
Grow softly blurred and charr'd
On their south edgings, while the logging-bells
Tinkle less coldly through the hemlock dells.
Or cease, amid snow-muffled lumber-stacks,
Where sledges come to "Whoa!" in the mill-yard.

Therefore, because this lovely season leaves,
Like all else, only memory to take
Joy of its vestiges, now for the sake
Of fleet delights that never may return,
Watch, dear, with me, where, 'neath the dropping
eaves

The iris-dewed icicles burn and burn,
Till beauty on our minds indelibly
Shall brand her image, bright with mutability.

STEEP ran the hill-road out of the wood:

Lambent, below us
Flushed in the valley
Snow-colored twilight —
Black isles of pine.

Hushed the cold tinklings, shuddered the sleigh:

Round the horizon,
Keen and auroral,
Burned on the hill-lines
Inexpressible rose.

Snorted the silvery breath of the horse:

Into the silken
Quivering silence,
Slid like a snowflake
Saint Agnes' moon.

A BIRTHDAY

(FOR S. S. P.)

SEVENTY years !

What memories are the peers

Of such a service ! Who shall send

Awed messengers into the vast of mind

To summon them ? Or who shall find

And herald their grand reticence ? — If hours

Are sometimes epochs, if there are

Minutes, which rise like Babylonian towers

Above time's sordid plain, who shall declare

The grandeur of this life ? What angel compass
it ?

Not words, but smiles and tears

Can hail, with homage fit,

Those seventy years.

ONCE more Chopin and Mendelssohn
Have conjured you, sweet Mother !
How playfully you charmed the one,
How pensively the other,
As, standing tiptoe on the stair,
I watched your waving golden hair !

Again I watch the flashing keys —
A dreamy boy, dear Mother,
Climbing to bed by slow degrees;
Again my sobs I smother
Where, hid beneath the muffling spread,
The heavenly music fills my head.

The heavenly music fills again
My heart with childhood, Mother,
And stirs with blended bliss and pain
Yearning I cannot smother :
A husht, tear-blinded ecstasy
Of mingled love and memory.

Only Chopin, or Mendelssohn,
None holier, and none other,
Can paint for me, with magic tone,
Your portrait, lovely Mother:
That face, amid the golden hair,
Forever young and debonair !

FOR A CHILD CONVALESCENT

BITTER death,
Blind heart-ache,
Now that you are gone,
How distracting-dear you make
This soft breath, this ease-drawn breath
Of my beloved one.
Sing, Spring!
Be gracious, weather!
My love and I and you are together.

Budding boughs,
Pale blue skies,
What if you had come
Senseless to her sealèd eyes,
Impotent her sleep to rouse,
All your songbirds dumb!
Sing, Spring!
Be grateful, weather!
My love and I and you are together.

Mighty God,
Thou in grace
That didst Death deter:
Lovely is Thy tranquil face
In the sunlight or the sod,
Loveliest in her.

Sing, Spring!
Bring, wind,
Soft weather —
Long and kind.
Sing, Spring!
Wing, Song,
On lark's feather —
Silver-lined.

Bring along,
Wind,
Kind song and weather,
Singing high —
High on lark's wing —
My love and I
In love and Spring
My love and I are together!

HALFWAY the climbing rose of Infancy —
 With tears for dew-drops shining on its thorns,
 Lit by the Mother-smile of peaceful morns,
All pink in bloom, with now a golden bee,
Burrowed in kisses, to hum lullaby,
 And now a shower, that intermits and warns
 The birds to carol 'twixt the thunder's horns,
Robin of babyhood, thy nest I see.

Babe of the birds, when from thy rosy source
 Thou shalt upclimb to boyhood's ruddier
 charm,
The brooks shall mock thy boisterous discourse,
 The skies uplift thy shout, where, held from
 harm,
Thou shalt disport on the big world's battered
 torse
 Like Bacchus on the Elgin Hermes' arm.

CATHLEEN

MY Cathleen of the wilding curl
And roguish yellow ringlet,
Oh, are you but a budding girl,
Or cherub clipt of winglet?

I kissed you, clambering at my knee,
All dimpled, shy and darling,
When every glance you shot at me
Flew like a starling.

You sang to me from printless books
Of tree-top-boughs a secret
So hushed, that in my heart those looks
Of baby wonder speak yet.

Of pussy-cat — the chucklehead!
An epic you told after,
Till porch and lawn and garden-bed
Caught that clear laughter.

You kissed me then — Ah, twinging joy!
Cathleen, that I might hover
About your steps, a golden boy,
To grow your golden lover.

Your lover ! Nay, I scorn his name,
Far rather, oh, far rather
I'll live, to thwart him, what I am :
His someday sweetheart's — father.

A BABY it was, or a bird :

'Twas hard to tell at a guessing ;
For the only tidings I heard —

Save a lullaby low and caressing —
Was a bunting out on a bough

Calling: *Quick, quick, quick, have you seen
her ?*

And a chickadee, perched on the mow,

Singing: *Christy, Christy, Christina !*

Not a bird, but a baby she is !

So cuddly and quaint and surprising :
As fresh as sweet clover to kiss,

More rosy and blithe than sunrising.
And her brother *he* was the bird

Calling: *Quick, quick, quick, have you seen
her ?*

And her sister the songster I heard

Singing: *Christy, Christy, Christina !*

BE merry, dear, for merry is the while,
And let Mirth make a ladder of thy woes
Whereon thy thoughts may mount unto thy
smile —
As fairies climb by briars to the rose.

THOU art the still-renewing spring
For poesie's replenishing.
By thy brink, like Rachel, stands
Beauty pensive: in her hands
Poised, she holds her artless pitcher;
Her own reveries bewitch her
Where she bends, with maiden start,
To fill it faultless at thy heart.

But I — poor stumbler with verse-vessels,
Worn rhyme-thin by fancy's pestles,
Stub my toe with too much longing
And break — what I should catch the song in.

I SAW white fields and shadows gray
And clouds the low sun lurked behind;
A quiet seemed to tint the day
With fainter colors of the mind,
For all of nature to my sight
Was tempered by an inner light.

The winter sun set clear as wine,
A silent star stole to its place,
And still, beneath a glooming pine,
She stood, with visionary grace
Watching the sky: I could not speak;
The words that faltered were too weak.

My voice was smothered in my eyes;
I gazed — and what so changeless sweet
(Since Love has twined our destinies)
As when, in retrospection fleet,
All after-visions I forget,
And dream that I am gazing yet.

THE perfect rose has but a paltry fruit;
The gracious summer but a garish end;
And May's sweet choirs in August all are mute,
And youth's strong loins his largess soon
dispend.

The water-lily, at her ripening,
Hides in the muddied lake her beauty's
spores;
Even in the tender calyx of the Spring
The icy-sharded worm of Winter bores.

But you, dear, are a flower of God's own isle,
Whose glammers ripen in the spirit's seed;
The Galilean lilies are your smile,
And in your aching heart the roses bleed;

And wreathed of fire cold Time can never smother
The maiden yields her garland to the mother.

ONLY the strong have right to reign in song —
The strong of soul, that are the warriors
Of God. — The weak-at-heart, he that out-
pours

His coward pain, perpetuates a wrong.
Therefore I promised you I would be strong,
Or silent: But now — hark! Again the doors
Of heaven are wide, and on the palace floors
I greet the Nine, who wept for me full long.

Look up once more, my love! The lark is risen;
Not as of old, above the immaculate fields,
Remote, of May he chants, but now he builds
His nest of dew beneath the common prison
Of Workaday: — O hark to him, dear one,
Rounding, of song and toil, a Pantheon!

REALIZING that the lives of men are rills
 Coursing in lines consecutive and bright
Down the pied slopes of Time's 'eternal hills,'
 Or flocks of mingling sea-birds, that alight

An hour upon the icebergs, there to strew
 Wide Babel o'er the pristine silences,
Then, soaring, blend in the universal blue:
 Brooding an hundred analogues like these

That show how we, bright atom-points of thought
 In this congested brain of being, reign
An instant and no longer in the plot
 Of God; realizing this, and then

Remembering I run my race with thee,
I grow in love with my mortality.

As ripples widen where the stone is cast,
 So we do wane toward the banks of death ;
 As dips the summer grass before the breath
Of the west wind, so lightly we are passed :
Our lives are liquid ; even when Grief has massed
 Their evanescent flowers to a mort-wreath,
 They are such icy blooms as a frosty heath
Paints on the glass-pane, and as long they last.

Therefore, since joy is the acquiescent will
 That blends our spirits' limbs with all which
 flows,
Since pain is the stagnant eddy and the chill
 That lies congealed within the withered rose,
Let us, sweet friend, of beauty drink our fill,
 And fix in natural change our soul's repose.

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